
THE WORLD'S WORKERS

FROM THE BRIGHT LEGACY.

Received 30 July, 1886.

Descendants of Henry Bright, jr., who died at Watertown, Mass., in 1695, are entitled to hold scholarships in Harvard College, established in 1880 under the will of

JONATHAN BROWN BRIGHT

of Waltham, Mass., with one half the income of this Legacy. Such descendants failing, other persons are eligible to the scholarships. The will requires that this announcement shall be made in every book added to the Library under its provisions.

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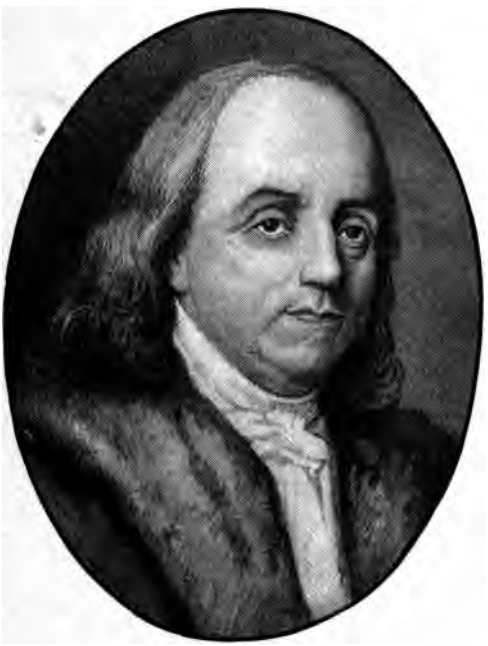

B. Franklin

THE WORLD'S WORKERS.

Benjamin Franklin.

BY

E. M. TOMKINSON.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

CHAPTER I.

A CONSPIRACY IN THE DARK.

THE conspirators were young but they were determined, and if you could have taken a good look at their faces, you would have seen in them all a certain earnestness which showed that they had an object in view, and meant to gain it. They were all boys, little boys, too, and their leader was younger than many of them; yet they had full confidence in him, for he had led them through many a difficulty before, and they knew his courage and wisdom would not fail him now.

"Do you think it is dark enough yet, Benjamin?" may have said one of the more nervous of the conspirators; but as we are speaking of something which happened more than a hundred and sixty years ago, we cannot be sure of the words. "Quite," may have been the young leader's answer. "Then keep up your courage and follow me."

Whereupon the little band made their way to a heap

of large stones which were put ready for building a house. No one ever rushed more eagerly at blackberries or primroses than those young conspirators rushed at the great ugly stones. Then with the earnestness and silence of a swarm of ants, they set to work to remove them. Here was one struggling with a lump which seemed far too heavy for his little body, yet ant-like, he dragged it a short distance, then rested, and took it on a little farther. Here were two or three joining their strength over a bigger stone still, which even the sturdiest of them could not have moved alone.

"That will do for the foundation," the leader may have said in a whisper, as he tried to encourage his followers in their labour. Fortunately they had not far to carry their spoils, and if we walk a little distance with them we shall find some hard at work under the direction of the boy Benjamin, building a rude wharf in a marsh which borders a pond.

This pond was their favourite fishing ground, and so eager had the boys been in their pursuit of minnows, that they had trampled the place into a regular quagmire. Benjamin had suggested that they should make a wharf on which they could stand in dryness and comfort, and this was the origin of the dark conspiracy to carry away the builder's stones.

The wharf was made, and the conspirators retired to bed; but the next morning the usual retribution fell upon them. They learnt, one and all, that deeds

which have to be done in the dark, must bring punishment in the light. The workmen missed their stones, and hunting for them discovered the wharf; and soon traced the wharf builders, when each boy was punished by his parents. The ringleader said many years afterwards when he was writing his own life, that his father soon convinced him, "That that which was not honest could not be useful."

It was a good lesson to learn, and perhaps Benjamin Franklin might not have been so great and noble a man, if he had never built that wharf *and been punished for it.*

Benjamin Franklin had been born at Boston in New England on 17th January, 1706. Although he is always spoken of as an American, his parents were both English people, who had left the old country some years before his birth. Benjamin was one of a family of sixteen, and the day he was born, his father, Josiah, carried him across the road to be christened in the Old Church. He was named Benjamin after an uncle who was still living in England, but who, by-and-bye, came across the Atlantic too, and had great influence on the character of his little namesake.

One day, when our hero was about seven years old, there was a holiday at the little school which he attended, and young Benjamin's pocket was filled with coppers by some friends.

Off he went in high glee to spend his money, wondering much as to what he should buy. On the

way he met a boy who was blowing a whistle, and being charmed with the noise he was making, Benjamin paid away all his money to buy one like it. On his return home he went about all over the house blowing his whistle, amusing himself somewhat to the discomfort of the other members of the family. By-and-bye he was asked how much he had paid for his new toy, and was told that he had given four times as much as it was worth! Besides this, his sisters and brothers teased him by reminding him what a number of nice things he might have bought if he had not spent all his money on that one.

At last the poor boy broke down under this artillery of reproaches, and bursting into tears of vexation, he really suffered more sorrow from thinking of his mistake than he had gained pleasure from the whistle. Benjamin never forgot this little incident, and many times in after life when he was tempted to buy something which he did not really want, he would say to himself, "Don't give too much for your whistle," and save his money. It is interesting to notice that the common saying, "You paid too dearly for your whistle," had its origin in this childish mistake of Benjamin Franklin, showing that the silly things one may do are often remembered as long as the wise and noble actions.

Soon after this, Benjamin was sent to the Grammar School. Josiah Franklin wished to make a clergyman of him, so he was to have a better education

than any of his brothers. Although he was only there a year, Benjamin made his way to the head of of the class in which he first entered, then through the next, and was looking forward to another move in the following term, when suddenly he was taken away and sent to learn the elements of education at a private school. Josiah Franklin found, not only that he could not afford to give his boy a college training, but also that he must before long take him from school altogether.

It was probably at this time that Benjamin became a little king amongst the boys of the neighbourhood. As they lived near the water, he was constantly in it, as well as on it, and could manage a boat as easily as he could swim, float, or dive. Unconsciously his companions came to look up to him, and when they were in any difficulty they generally expected him to bring them safely out of it. He did not always govern his subjects wisely, as may be seen by the wharf-building anecdote, but the very fact of his leading boys far older than himself shows that he had even then the powers of mind which were afterwards to make him a ruler among men.

Young as he was, Benjamin showed signs of an inventive genius, and never seemed to be at loss what to do in an emergency. The large pond, nearly a mile broad, which formed such a capital fishing ground, was equally good for swimming. But young Franklin was not content to go on swimming in humdrum fashion

from side to side. He set his brain to work to invent some means of increasing the power of the strokes, and eventually made two oval pallets, about ten inches long, and six broad, with a hole for the thumb. With one of these on each hand and similar sandals for the feet, he found he could swim much faster, but his wrists ached dreadfully, and as the action of the sandals was not quite satisfactory, he was forced to the conclusion that nature's own implements were the best for swimming.

However, another experiment which he made at this time proved quite a success. He was very fond of kite-flying, and one day finding the pond looked very pleasant he fastened his kite to a stake, and went in for a swim. Meanwhile the kite had risen, and was pulling at the string as if anxious to be off on a voyage of discovery. Benjamin thought how nice it would be if he could amuse himself with his kite, and still be in the water; so he made his way to shore, took hold of the little piece of wood at the end of the string, and entering the pond again, he lay on his back on the surface of the water, and found he was drawn along in a most delightful way. Swimming back to land once more, he engaged a boy to carry his clothes round for him, then went into the water, and was pulled right across by his kite.

Writing long afterwards to a friend, he told him of his adventure, and said that he thought it would be quite possible to cross the Channel from Dover to

Calais in that way, though he preferred the packet boat. So would most people probably, for it would be rather awkward if the wind changed just in the middle of the voyage, and carried the kite out to the Atlantic, or the North Sea.

While Benjamin was training his body to endurance by all sorts of healthy exercises, George Brownwell was training his fingers to write well, but utterly failed in making his new pupil care for arithmetic. Even this scanty amount of education was stopped ere long, for when only ten years old, Benjamin was taken away from school to help his father, who was a tallow-chandler, and soap-boiler. The boy was set to cut wicks, fill moulds for candles, and run errands, but although he did his work well, he disliked it thoroughly and pined for a more exciting life. An elder brother had run away to sea some years before, and now Benjamin felt much inclined to follow his bad example.

The uncle after whom he was named, hearing of his little nephew's desire for a warlike career, wrote the following lines to him :—

"Believe me, Ben, it is a dangerous trade,
The sword has many marred as well as made;
By it do many fall, not many rise—
Makes many poor, few rich, and fewer wise;
Fills towns with ruin, fields with blood: beside
'Tis sloth's maintainer, and the shield of pride;
Fair cities, rich to-day in plenty flow,
War fills with want to-morrow and with woe,
Ruined estates, the nurse of vice, broke limbs and scars
Are the effects of desolating wars."

This appalling list of horrors that grew from the profession which he had hitherto deemed so glorious, made little Benjamin for a time give up all thoughts of a sailor's life. There is not much poetry in it, but it probably helped the boy to work well at a business which he greatly disliked, for two years. Something else his uncle's verses certainly did: they made Benjamin anxious to write poetry himself, and he made up his mind if he could not be a sailor he would be a poet. Accordingly he wrote an answer in rhyme to his uncle, who, being inclined to think this little goose a real swan, was delighted with his nephew's talent.

Although Benjamin did not like his work, those two years of quiet home life did a great deal towards moulding his character. Josiah Franklin and his wife were well suited for the charge of a large family, and brought them up carefully in frugal and industrious habits. The home was plain indeed, and without pretensions of any kind, but there was money enough to feed the children well, and dress them comfortably.

It was a favourite custom of Josiah Franklin's to have some sensible friend at table during meals, and then they would start some amusing and instructive subject of conversation for the children's benefit. This took their attention from their food, so that they did not get into the way of criticising, or grumbling at the quantity or kind which was set before them.

In after life Benjamin found this early training a great comfort to him, as he was satisfied with plain,

rough fare while travelling, while his companions were often discontented and unhappy.

But Benjamin did something else besides fish, and swim in the pond, or work with his father at home, otherwise he would never have risen to the eminence afterwards attained. From his earliest days he had been a lover of reading, and spent all the money he could get on books, with the exception, perhaps, of that unfortunate whistle. Most young people would consider his a very dry library. It consisted of "The Pilgrim's Progress," "Plutarch's Lives," historical collections (forty volumes of history, travels and adventure), "Essays on Projects," and Cotton Mather's "Essays to do Good." He knew how to get the full value out of a book; for he would read and re-read it, then sell it for another, which he did not know. Cotton Mather's book was a great favourite with him, and when he was eighty years old he wrote to the author's son, Samuel: "When I was a boy I met with a book entitled 'Essays to do Good,' which, I think, was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by a former possessor that several leaves of it were torn out, but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good than on any other kind of reputation, and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owe the advantage of it to that book."

In this way, by childish mistakes and by childish experiments, by home life and by home reading, was gradually formed the character of the boy, who was, when a man, to be more talked of and admired, for a time, than any one in Europe and America. Meanwhile two years had rolled by, and as Josiah saw that his own trade was as distasteful as ever to his youngest boy, and that he was still hankering after a seafaring life, he adopted a way of his own for finding out what work Benjamin would prefer to that of candle-making.

Day after day father and son walked together and visited all the workshops of Boston, in order that the boy might judge for himself to which trade he would like to be apprenticed. Nor was this wasted time, for Benjamin was so sharp that he picked up many useful hints, which enabled him in after years to do various little jobs in his house, without calling in a workman every time something went wrong.

There was a cousin of Benjamin's who was a cutler, and as this trade seemed to take the boy's fancy, he would have been apprenticed to him, but the premium asked was too high. Josiah Franklin had an elder son named James, who had been sent to England to learn printing. He had now come back and set up business on his own account at Boston. Josiah naturally thought that he could not do better than place Benjamin with his brother James, as they would be sure to get on well together.

Accordingly, Benjamin was apprenticed to his brother, when only twelve years old; he was to remain with him till he was twenty-one, but for the last twelve months he was to receive journeyman's wages.

Now for the first time our young friend was able to satisfy his taste for reading. As he became intimate with the bookseller's apprentices they would lend him books, which he would often sit up all night to read, so that they might be returned in the morning before they were missed in the shops. This was hardly a right way of obtaining information, and so Benjamin was very glad when a certain merchant named Adams, having heard that the printer's lad was fond of reading, took an interest in him and gave him the run of a very good library.

Before long Benjamin began writing verses again. Two thrilling events had happened of a very different nature, but which were equally subjects of conversation. The one was the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters, the other the capture of a cruel pirate, commonly known as Blackbeard. Benjamin took these for his subjects, and composed two ballads in very inferior doggerel.

James Franklin, knowing that such productions would be popular just while the memory of the events lasted, sent Benjamin about the streets to sell them, and many copies were bought by people who little thought that the boy who sold the ballads had also composed and printed them. Fortunately for Ben-

jamin's future his father discouraged him from rhyming, by saying that poets were generally beggars, and thereby saved him from being a feeble verse writer instead of a good prose author.

CHAPTER II.

OUT IN THE WORLD.

IT has been very wisely said that "where there's a will there's a way." By the time he was sixteen Benjamin began to wish for more leisure to study and more money to buy books; he obtained both these in a peculiar way.

In the course of his varied reading he had come upon a book in favour of vegetarianism, which represented the killing of any living thing for food as a species of murder. The matter was so clearly argued that Benjamin was convinced by it, and gave up all animal food for some years. As James was not married, he and his apprentices boarded with a family, and this new freak of young Franklin's caused a good deal of inconvenience.

Always eager to seize any opportunity of increasing his time for study, Benjamin proposed that his brother should give him half the sum which he had hitherto paid for his board, and let him provide himself with food. To this James agreed, and the young

apprentice found that he could feed himself on half the amount he received, and save the rest for the purchase of books. Then there was another advantage. As his brother and the other apprentices went out to their meals, he was left alone to read, and was not so dull and heavy as he would have been after a big dinner, as that meal often consisted of a handful of raisins and a roll of bread, washed down by a glass of water. One might suppose that he was feeding his mind at the risk of his body, but he had such a splendid constitution that nothing seemed to affect it much.

During these years he studied principally arithmetic, navigation, and rhetoric; and, by reading Xenophon's book on Socrates, found out that it was wiser to drop the dogmatic and imperious style in argument to which he had been much inclined. He then trained himself to argue in a diffident, humble way, which made him, as a man, lovable and pleasant, even when he differed widely from the persons with whom he conversed. These studies might have been less interesting to him, perhaps, if he had not made his first great friendship with a boy named John Collins, who, like himself, loved books; so the two stimulated each other to work.

Finding one day a volume of the *Spectator*, Franklin was so pleased with it that he determined to take it as his model. The way in which he did this is a testimony to the extraordinary originality and per-

severance which he possessed, and may be useful to many who have to teach themselves. First he would read an article carefully, writing down short hints of the thoughts contained in each sentence; then he would put away his notes for a few days, and at the end of that time, when the original article had faded away from his memory, he would try to write it out with the help of his own notes; then he would compare his production with the *Spectator*, and correct all mistakes. Still keeping his love for poetry, he would sometimes turn an article into verse, and then back again into prose. All these studies were pursued far into the night, or before work in the morning.

Benjamin did not get on very well with his elder brother. James was overbearing and passionate, and Benjamin, according to his own account, was often headstrong and insolent, so that his master lost patience with him, and so far forgot the duties of brotherly love as to strike his young apprentice. This, of course, did not please Benjamin, and once more the desire to break away from all restraint came into his heart. An event, however, occurred which, though small in itself, finally decided the boy's career.

James Franklin started a newspaper in 1720, called the *New England Courant*, and several of his friends contributed articles to it. It fell to Benjamin's lot to set the type for this paper, to print off two or three hundred copies, and then to deliver them at the houses of the subscribers. Many a time he

listened to the conversations between James and his friends, and heard them speak of the praise which had been given to certain articles. A new ambition now fired the young printer, and he eagerly wished that he too could write something for the newspaper, but he felt that his brother would probably object to publish anything that came from his pen, and he dreaded being laughed at by his brother's friends.

Time passed on, till Benjamin was nearly sixteen years old, and then one night he entered into another plot; but how different from that in which we first found him engaged! He is alone this time, and has a small packet in his hand. The night is dark, yet he glances anxiously down the two streets at the corner of which stands the printing-office of James Franklin; then he approaches the door, pushes the packet under it, and runs home as fast as his legs can carry him.

We can imagine how his heart beat the next morning when James opened the mysterious communication addressed in an unknown hand, and called some literary friends to read the anonymous article: how he must have dreaded that his brother should recognise his writing, in spite of his best efforts to disguise it; and then how difficult it must have been to restrain a cry of joy when he heard his article warmly praised, and pronounced fit for publication.

He wrote many more pieces, and delivered them

at the office in the same way, with the quaint signature of "Silence Dogood;" and when at last he told his brother that he was the unknown contributor, he found that he was treated with a little more kindness.

Before many weeks had passed away, James Franklin was summoned before the Assembly, and condemned to a month's imprisonment for some political articles which had displeased them.

Although Benjamin, was only sixteen, he edited the paper during his brother's absence, besides setting the type, printing, and delivering it as before. When James Franklin was released he was expressly forbidden to continue the paper, so it was carried on in Benjamin's name. In order that it might not be said that James Franklin's apprentice edited it, and that he was still responsible for what was published in it, Benjamin was released from his old indentures; though James took care to have new ones drawn up in secret, not wishing to lose his clever helper. For some months things went on as usual, Benjamin conducting the paper entirely; but one day, James struck him again in a violent fit of passion, and Benjamin determined to run away. His conscience pricked him, when he remembered that he was still bound by the secret indentures, but he managed to stifle it by the plea that his brother's unjust conduct freed him from them.

He now applied to John Collins for help, and his friend persuaded the captain of a sloop, bound for

New York, to take the young apprentice on board. Selling some of his books to raise a little money, Benjamin left his home without a word of farewell, and joined the vessel at night.

In his own account of his life, written when he was quite an old man, Benjamin Franklin is very open, and owns to certain mistakes which he would gladly correct if his time came over again. It is rather strange that so wise a man should not count this early breaking from restraint as one of his greatest mistakes; for he left his loving parents without a word, and did not even let them know where he was, for some months. There is much in the life of this great man which is worthy of imitation, but we would certainly not advise anyone to start in life as he did.

While we have been talking, the sloop has been making her way towards New York. Just as she neared Block Island, a dead calm came on, and as there seemed no chance of a breeze, the sailors began fishing. Plenty of cod and haddock were caught, but Benjamin looked on in sorrow, and blamed the men for taking the life of creatures which had done them no harm. By-and-bye, when the fish was in the frying-pan, our young runaway, who was very hungry, thought he had never smelt anything so delicious. As he was watching a sailor cutting a cod open for frying, he noticed that there was a smaller fish inside, which the big one had evidently eaten. Then, Benjamin's heart gave a little bound of joy.

"Ah!" he cried; "if you can eat one another, I surely have a right to eat you," and he sat down with the rest of the men, and enjoyed a capital dinner. From that day he ate as other people did, only returning to a vegetable diet from time to time for a change.

Three days from that on which he left Boston, Benjamin found himself in New York; he was under eighteen years of age, had very little money in his pocket, and knew nobody.

The city contained fewer than eight thousand inhabitants, who were mostly Dutch; and there was but one printing-office, kept by William Bradford. To him Benjamin applied for work, but without success; Bradford, however, took a fancy to the lad, and advised him to apply to his son in Philadelphia, who was also a printer, and had just lost an apprentice.

Philadelphia was a hundred miles further on, but Benjamin was not to be easily discouraged. Leaving his box of clothes to go all the way by sea, he took passage for himself in a little boat, which was going along the coast to Amboy. But soon after they started a squall came on, which split up the sail, and pitched the only other passenger overboard. Franklin, with the greatest coolness, caught hold of him by the hair and so saved him from drowning. The man who was thus cleverly rescued was a Dutchman, who was not very sober. After his impromptu bath he settled down

for a nap ; first asking Benjamin to dry a book for him which had been well soaked in his pocket. Anything in the shape of a book had a charm for young Franklin, and he found that this was a more beautiful edition of " The Pilgrim's Progress," than any he had ever seen. It was written in Dutch, on good paper, with copper cuts and a handsome binding.

Although they were within sight of the shore, the surf was so heavy that they dared not attempt to land, and were obliged to cast anchor off Long Island, where a bend in the land sheltered them a little. Here they tossed about all night, getting what rest they could with the spray dashing continually over them. The next day, the wind had abated a little and they were able to mend their sail, and make their way to Amboy, where they landed after being thirty hours on the water, without food or drink of any kind except common rum.

There is little wonder that poor Benjamin found himself very feverish at night, but having heard that cold water was a good remedy for this, he drank a great quantity, perspired freely through the night, and woke up much better.

Fifty miles of forest land had still to be crossed before Franklin could reach Burlington, where he was told that boats called on their way to Philadelphia. There was no chance of getting a cart or coach to carry him, even if he had had money enough to pay for such a luxury ; so Benjamin started in the rain to walk along

the path, which was little better than an Indian trail.

Passing a humble cabin in the afternoon, he begged for shelter for the night, as he was too exhausted to continue his journey. He was in his working clothes, which were by this time so torn and soiled, that the inhabitants of the little house seemed to be very suspicious of him, although they granted his request. Now for the first time the runaway apprentice repented of his rash deed, and wished himself back in his comfortable and happy home.

Pushing on the next day, he slept in another settler's cabin, and arrived early the following morning at Burlington, to find that he had just missed the Saturday boat, and that there was no other until Tuesday. He bought some gingerbread from an old woman in the street, and then set to work to think over his plans.

On consulting the map of the United States, we find that Philadelphia is on the east side of the Delaware River, while Burlington is on the west; it was impossible, therefore, for Benjamin to walk to the former place. On counting his money he found he had only five shillings, so it seemed equally impossible for him to lodge at Burlington till Tuesday, and still have enough to pay his passage across the river. He felt lonely and miserable, and remembering that the old woman, of whom he had bought his gingerbread,

looked very kind, he made his way back to her, and asked her advice.

Without a moment's hesitation the poor woman insisted on his going to her little home. Here Franklin had a good dinner, for which he gave her a mere trifle, and was overjoyed to find that he had a shelter, and a kind hostess, for the time which must elapse before the arrival of the vessel. As he was lounging by the river-side in the evening, he saw a boat going towards Philadelphia; it was crowded with people, and Benjamin hailed it, and was taken on board. Two or three misfortunes occurred, even in this short voyage, and they did not reach Philadelphia till nine o'clock on Sunday morning.

Benjamin stepped ashore in his dirty, tattered clothes, with his pockets stuck out with shirts and stockings, and with only one silver dollar in his purse. Little did he think that he would one day be the governor of the province on which he now landed for the first time in such a shabby condition—without money, and without friends.

Tired out, hungry, and miserable, he dragged his weary body towards the town, and entering the first baker's shop, he asked for three pennyworth of bread. To his surprise he received three "great puffy rolls." His pockets were full, so there was nothing for it but to tuck one under each arm, while he applied the other to his mouth, and in this way he walked aimlessly through the streets. He saw a very pretty girl of

about his own age standing at an open door; she noticed him too, and thought how funny he looked munching his roll, and hugging the other two in his arms. Her name was Deborah Read, and we shall meet her again presently. After sauntering about a little longer, Franklin returned to the river for a drink of water; and giving the two rolls to a poor woman and child who had come in the same boat as himself, he walked back into the town.

Seeing a great number of people streaming one way, he followed them, and was soon inside a Quaker's meeting-house, where he fell asleep, and was only roused when the service was over. Homeless and tired, he asked a young Quaker whether he could tell him where to get a night's lodging. The Quaker, whose good-natured face did not belie his character, directed Franklin to an inn called "The Crooked Billet," and there the poor boy, after enjoying a plain dinner, threw himself on the bed, and slept till supper, then went to bed again and slept soundly till morning, when he made his way to Andrew Bradford's printing-office.

Here disappointment awaited him, for Bradford did not want his help, as he had engaged another apprentice, and could only promise an occasional job. The elder Bradford had, however, taken a fancy to the lad, and having ridden from New York, had arrived at Philadelphia before him, and now offered to take him to the only other printer in the town, whose name was Keimer. This man put a "com-

posing stick"—in which type is set—into Franklin's hand, and being pleased with the way in which he worked, said he would employ him soon. This was not quite what poor Benjamin wanted; and he seems to have set to work at once to mend the wretched little printing-press, and so obtained a footing in Keimer's office. He lodged meanwhile at Bradford's, where he helped with the printers, instead of giving money for his board and lodging.

After a little time, when Keimer gave the stranger regular employment, he objected to his living with a man whom he considered his rival, and took a room for him at Mr. Read's. Here it was that Benjamin became acquainted with the Deborah who had been so much amused by his ridiculous appearance on the day of his arrival.

This time, however, he was more fit to pay his respects to the young lady, for he had received his chest of clothes, and had dressed himself with the neatness and taste for which he was noted all his life. Sunshine comes after the darkest storm, and now Benjamin was happier than he had been for a long time. He had work he liked; his employer appreciated him, and he lived on friendly terms with the Reads. Nevertheless, his thoughts must often have turned to the loving ones at home, who did not even yet know where he was, though he tried to quiet his conscience by the remembrance of his brother's ill-treatment.

One day Franklin was astonished by receiving a

letter from his brother-in-law, who was the captain of a vessel which ran between Boston and the ports on the Delaware. Captain Holmes remonstrated kindly with Benjamin on his thoughtless conduct, and said how distressed his parents were, urging him to return at once, when all would be forgiven.

Benjamin answered this letter directly, and showed such good reasons for what he had done, that Captain Holmes was convinced that his young brother-in-law was not so much in the wrong as he had at first supposed. When the captain received this letter he was with Sir William Keith, who was then Governor of Pennsylvania, and he read it to him. Sir William was very much struck by the style of the letter; it was so unlike what one would expect from a printer's boy of eighteen; and he declared that such a youth ought to be encouraged. He said, too, that both the printers in Philadelphia were wretchedly bad, and that if Benjamin would set up for himself there, he would help him.

Of course Franklin knew nothing of this, till one day, when he and Keimer were working near the window, Sir William and another gentleman came across the road, and knocked at the door of the printing-office. Keimer was in a perfect flutter of delight at the prospect of a visit from the Governor; but was somewhat displeased when he found that it was his new apprentice who was wanted, and was carried off to dine at a neighbouring inn.

CHAPTER III.

ONE FOOT ON THE LADDER.

IN studying the history of Benjamin Franklin, we may date the commencement of his prosperity from the day of that interview with Governor Keith. Now for the first time, Benjamin began to reap the fruits of all his early study, for if he had not spent so many hours in copying the style of the *Spectator*, how could he have written a letter which would at once secure the admiration of a perfect stranger, far above himself in station and learning?

The Governor urged him to get help from his father, and set up as a printer in Philadelphia, promising him all the Government work of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Benjamin replied that he was sure his father could not and would not help him, and Sir William immediately promised that if that were so, he would set him up himself, only Benjamin must go to Boston to try to make some arrangements with his father first, taking with him a letter from the Governor to help his cause.

In those days printers ranked next to lawyers, doctors, and clergymen, and as Benjamin was clever, handsome, and well-behaved, he was constantly invited to dine with the Governor during the time which must needs pass before the boat started for Boston.

His good manners and witty conversation made him a great favourite with the distinguished guests whom he met, and although Sir William afterwards cruelly deceived him, there is no doubt that it was greatly due to him that Franklin began to climb the ladder of fame. When his foot was once planted on the first rung, his own talent and honesty, unvarying good temper, and untiring patience helped him to mount, one step at a time, till he reached the top.

Towards the end of April, 1724, Benjamin started for Boston in a little vessel which soon sprang a leak, and took fourteen days to accomplish the journey, during which time passengers and crew worked hard at the pumps. If there had been any love for a sailor's life still lurking in Franklin's heart, most certainly his experience of the sea would have cured it. Something unpleasant often occurred when he was on board, as if the waters wished to teach him what he had escaped by not being tied to a life on the ocean wave.

When the truant reached home, he was received with loving words and a hearty welcome. He was better dressed than he had ever been before, had his pockets full of silver, and actually possessed a handsome watch of which he seemed very proud. His father Josiah read Sir William Keith's letter, and talked it over with Captain Holmes, who had kindly gone to Boston to use his influence on Benjamin's

side; but the elder Franklin would not have a hand in setting Benjamin up in business.

"Benjamin is too young to undertake so important an enterprise," he said. "I am much gratified that he has been able to secure the approbation of the Governor of Pennsylvania, and that by his industry and fidelity he has been able to attain prosperity so remarkable. If he will return to Philadelphia and work diligently until he is twenty-one, carefully laying up his surplus earnings, I will then do everything in my power to aid him."

Young Franklin had to be content with this promise, and set to work to get as much pleasure as possible out of his visit to Boston. One of the first people whom he called upon was Cotton Mather, the author of the book which had done so much towards forming his character. As he was leaving the house by a back way, and walking through a narrow passage, so that he had to look over his shoulder to talk to his host, Mather suddenly called out "Stoop, stoop!" Benjamin did not obey directly, and banged his head against a low hanging beam.

As his young friend rubbed the wounded part, the writer said, "You are young, and have the world before you. Stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps." Sixty years afterwards Benjamin Franklin wrote to Cotton Mather's son, "This advice, thus *beaten into* my head, has frequently been of use to me. And I often think of it when I

see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by carrying their heads too high."

John Collins was still living at Boston, and hearing such a glowing description of Philadelphia he determined to go there too, and agreed to meet Benjamin at New York. Meanwhile the latter had bidden adieu to all his friends and relations, and started with a cheerful heart for Philadelphia. This time he had his parents' permission, and the Governor's promise was before him, so he enjoyed the voyage immensely, without a suspicion of the disappointment which was soon to teach him to trust only to his own exertions for success.

As the boat stopped at Newport, in Rhode Island, he went ashore to see his brother John who had settled there. If Benjamin had been able to foresee events, he certainly would not have called on his brother, for it was owing to that visit that he was led to commit one of the greatest faults of his life.

A certain Mr. Vernon, who was staying with John Franklin, asked Benjamin if he would kindly draw the sum of £38, which was due to him at Philadelphia, and keep the amount till Vernon should write for it. Franklin consented, little thinking of the misery that money would cause him.

Unfortunately for our hero, his friend Collins had fallen into bad ways, and when Franklin arrived at New York, he found Collins had wasted all his money on drink, and had not enough to pay the

expenses of his lodgings, not to speak of the journey to Philadelphia. Franklin generously paid all his friend's debts as well as his passage money; but he was so ashamed of his appearance and manners, that he must have been glad when the time came to leave New York.

As if to compensate a little for the disgrace which his old friend brought upon him, Franklin was now introduced to another Governor. William Burnett, Governor of New York, was an ardent lover of books, and had a fine library; so when he heard from the captain of the vessel which had come from Boston, that there was a young man on board of similar tastes, who was bringing a number of books with him, he immediately wished to make his acquaintance. He sent for Franklin, and the two, so widely apart in age and position, had a very pleasant chat on books and authors. "This was the second Governor who had done me the honour to take notice of me," writes Franklin; "and to a poor boy like me it was very pleasing."

When the two friends had left New York, and were sailing down the Delaware, the wind dropped suddenly, and as the tide turned at the same time, they had to cast anchor, and wait for whichever should come first in their favour, wind or tide. The sun was very hot on board, and although there were several passengers to talk to, they were not very agreeable. Benjamin was longing for solitude and

shade, when, looking towards land, he saw, as he thought, a green meadow with a large tree in the middle. He persuaded the captain to put him ashore, but soon found that things are not always what they seem. The greater part of the meadow was swampy, so that in going to the tree which had looked so inviting, he was up to the knees in mud; worse still, he had not been five minutes in the shade, when the mosquitoes attacked his legs, hands, and face, and compelled him to beat a hasty retreat. When he was taken on board again, he had to bear the laughter of the passengers, as well as the heat he had tried to escape. Certainly Shakespeare was right when he said it was better to "bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of."

On his arrival at Philadelphia, Franklin gave Governor Keith the letter from his father, and Sir William promptly said that he would set Franklin up in business himself. He told him to make out a list of things which would be necessary, and promised to send for them at once. Nothing doubting, Benjamin wrote an inventory of goods required, which came to £100, and then the Governor asked whether it would be better for him to go to London himself to purchase the things. The young printer was, of course, delighted with this idea, and was then told to get ready to start by the *Annis*, a vessel which sailed once a year from Philadelphia. This would not be for six months, and Benjamin was strictly bound to

secrecy, lest Keimer should hear of the proposed plan, which would not, of course, suit his views.

During these months Franklin would have been quite happy, but for his friend Collins, whose bad habits led Benjamin to commit the act of dishonesty which we have already hinted at. To rescue Collins from debt, he drew upon the money which he had in trust; and as soon as Collins found that his friend had a reserve fund, he gave him no peace till it was all gone. This, Franklin owns, was one of the great errors of his life, and being by nature honest and honourable, he had no peace of mind till he had paid it all back with interest. At last Collins and he quarrelled, and the former went off to Barbadoes without attempting to pay his debt; but the gain to Benjamin in being freed from his influence and presence was greater than the loss of the money.

As John Collins had long given up the studies which he formerly used to share with Franklin, the clever printer had made friends with three young men who were as fond of learning as himself. Watson, Osborne, and Ralph joined with Benjamin in a literary club. They met regularly, and each member was expected to read some composition of his own, which was freely criticised by the others. In spite of all Franklin's advice to the contrary, Ralph had set his heart on being a poet, and favoured the club with many poems, which Osborne declared to be utterly worthless.

One day it was suggested that they should all turn the eighteenth Psalm into verse. Before the next meeting, Ralph called upon Franklin, and begged him to read *his* copy as if it were Benjamin's own; he was sure Osborne was prejudiced in the criticisms he made, and that this would be the only way to find out his real opinion. Franklin had not written anything himself, so he copied Ralph's poem, and read it as his own. A perfect storm of applause greeted it, and when Ralph quietly suggested two or three faults, Osborne was quite indignant, and exclaimed that Ralph was no more fit to *criticise* than to *write* a poem. It may easily be imagined how foolish Osborne looked at the next meeting, when he was told the real author. This anecdote teaches a good lesson of what we may call the blindness of prejudice.

Before the time came for the sailing of the *Annis*, Benjamin was engaged to Deborah Read; he was anxious to be married before leaving for England, but as their parents thought them both too young, it was agreed they should wait until Franklin came back, and set up for himself in business. As the day approached for the sailing of the vessel, Franklin was made very anxious by the extraordinary behaviour of Governor Keith. Day after day he promised to give his protégé letters of introduction to people in England, and a note of credit, which would enable him to buy all the things he required; but these generous promises were never fulfilled, and Benjamin

actually went on board without the letters. Sir William, however, sent word, that although he was too busy to see Franklin, he would send all the necessary documents before the vessel sailed on 5th November, 1724.

Accordingly, just at the last moment, Colonel French came on board with the Governor's despatches, and Benjamin asked the captain at once for those which belonged to him. Owing to the bustle of starting, the captain declined to sort the letters just then. To make a long story short, Benjamin arrived in London on December 14th, and found that the Governor had grossly deceived him, and that there were no letters of introduction or notes of credit. He now learnt for the first time that he must make his own way in the world, and seek for help from no one.

But although Benjamin was a stranger in a strange land, he had at least two friends; the one Ralph, who had come over with him from Philadelphia to seek a fortune in England, and the other a Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, whose acquaintance he had made on board ship. To the latter, Franklin applied for advice, and found that Governor Keith was noted for promising a great deal and performing little. Mr. Denham advised Benjamin to seek employment with some printer in London until he could save enough money to return to America.

Once more then, our hero was thrown on his own

resources; he and Ralph took lodgings in the city at a place called Little Britain, and whilst Ralph, having spent every penny he possessed, tried in vain for employment as actor, author, or copyist, Benjamin kept to the work he could do best, and obtained a situation at a printing-office in Bartholomew Close (Palmer's), were he stayed for nearly a year, keeping Ralph as well as himself.

During the early part of his life, Benjamin seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate in his friends. He chose them because they had similar tastes, but most certainly they each had characters very different from his own. Ralph came to be a continual drain upon his pocket, until at last he moved into Berkshire, leaving all his debts unpaid, and opened a school under the name of "Franklin." Soon after this a quarrel ensued between the two friends, who did not meet for many years, when Ralph had given up poetry, and become a fairly good prose writer.

Now came another of the errors which Benjamin in after years would gladly have corrected; he forgot all about Deborah Read—wrote to her only once, telling her that he was not likely soon to return, and then left her in uncertainty as to whether he were alive or dead.

Whilst working at Palmer's, Franklin wrote the first of many pamphlets which were in time to rank him amongst the chief literary men of the day, and was surprised to find what a sensation it caused

amongst a certain class of men in London. One by one he became acquainted with many noted characters; and their society, instead of making the young printer conceited, made him more anxious to study that he might be more fit to share in their conversation. He found great difficulty in getting books now, for he could spare no money to buy them.

We have already seen that Benjamin was not easily thwarted when he had set his heart on anything, and so he soon hit upon a plan by which he could satisfy his craving for knowledge. Next door to his lodgings there was a second-hand book shop, and he made an arrangement with the owner by which he could read and return the books as often as he wished. Circulating libraries are numerous enough now, but this was quite a new idea then.

After being nearly a year at Palmer's, Benjamin obtained a better situation at Watts' printing-office in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he worked for the remainder of the time he was in London. Here he was nicknamed "Water American," for whilst the other men drank five or six pints of beer during the day, he took nothing but water, yet he was much stronger than they, and was able to carry in one hand cases of type which they could hardly manage with two.

Not content with merely being nicknamed on account of his temperate habits, Benjamin set to work to persuade his companions to take a breakfast of

porridge, instead of bread-and-cheese and beer, and gradually gained many converts to his mode of living.

Benjamin was, as we have said, a great swimmer. One day, when he was returning from a holiday excursion on the river with some friends, he jumped into the water at Chelsea, and swam all the way to Blackfriars, a distance of four miles, besides doing all sorts of tricks under the water. He was so well known for his cleverness in this way, and in teaching others how to swim, that he was specially requested to open a swimming school. Fortunately for the world at large, and America in particular, Franklin had just promised to return to Philadelphia with Mr. Denham as his clerk; so England lost a good swimming master, while the world gained a philosopher, and America a champion.

CHAPTER IV.

HARD WORK.

FRANKLIN was tired of London life, and was heartily glad when the day came for him to leave it for his native land. On 23rd July, 1726, he sailed from Gravesend, accompanied by Mr. Denham. An amusing journal, kept by him during the voyage, shows that wind and wave were once more against him. There were no steamers in those days, and when the

wind chose to oppose the progress of a vessel, there was nothing to be done but wait till it altered its course.

When the *Berkshire* had gone as far as the Isle of Wight, the wind turned against her, and so those passengers who wished to see England's fairest island were put on shore to amuse themselves as well as they could. One evening, Franklin and two others left some of their party in a little inn at Freshwater, and went round the Creek to see the church. They wandered about till it was dark, when they were told that the quickest way to get back to their friends would be to go to the mouth of the Creek, and take the ferry.

The boy who had charge of the boat was in bed, and refused to get up; so the three travellers went down to the water, determined to help themselves to his boat, and row across in it. It was fastened to a stake, and the tide had come up fifty yards between it and the shore. Franklin immediately stripped to his shirt, and walked into the water; he was above his knees in mud, and found that the boat was locked and chained. Not wishing to be beaten, he tried to draw out the staple, but in vain. Then he attempted to pull up the stake; and after exerting all his strength for an hour, he had to return to shore, and own himself vanquished.

None of the three had any money with them, and they began to think they would have to sleep in some

field, when one recollected that he had a horseshoe in his pocket, which he had picked up during their walk, and suggested that it might be useful. Once more Benjamin went into the water, and returned in triumph with the boat. All now seemed easy enough; but, alas! they ran into a mud-bank, broke an oar in trying to get off, and finally stuck fast in the middle of the creek.

A pleasant prospect now lay before them of passing the night in an open boat, to be awoke in the morning by the laughter and scorn of the owner. At last two of them stripped and got out; the boat being lighter, drew less water, and they managed to drag her into a deeper part. Then they got in again, and by dint of perseverance, reached shore with their one oar, tied up the boat, and went to find their companions. Franklin does not say who went overboard, but we may be pretty sure he was one of the two.

On October 11th he reached Philadelphia, where he found that Keimer had a better house, plenty of new type, and some fresh hands; but Miss Read had married, despairing of his return. He worked happily with Denham, keeping his books, copying his letters, and attending to his store, until February, 1727, when both master and clerk were taken ill. Franklin recovered after some weeks, but Mr. Denham died.

When Keimer heard that his old apprentice was

free again, he offered him the post of manager in his printing-office, in order that he might have more time to devote himself to the stationer's shop. At first Benjamin did not care to accept this offer, but the prospect of good wages tempted him, and he entered upon his new duties with five men under him. He was now a sort of *factotum* (do-all), even casting new type, which had hitherto been brought from England, as there was no letter-foundry in America.

Wherever Franklin was, and whatever his duties, he always managed to make time for self-improvement. Accordingly, he now started a Society called the "Junto, or Leather-apron Club," because nearly every one who joined was a mechanic. They met regularly every Friday evening for discussion. Twenty-four questions were read, and these were answered by any member who was able to do so.

By the time Franklin had taught the other printers all he knew, Keimer began to think he could do without him. One day, when Benjamin put his head out of the window to discover the cause of a great noise in the street, Keimer looked up from below, and called out so loudly and angrily, that Benjamin saw he wished to get rid of him, and left directly.

Once more the young printer had to begin anew. To some people it may have seemed that he was going downwards on the ladder of life, but in reality each apparent check helped him onward, by causing

him to put forward more of the energy which nature had given him.

So now, at twenty-one years of age, he determined to start a printing-office for himself. Among the workmen at Keimer's was a certain Hugh Meredith, who was very clever, but inclined to drink too much. Benjamin had taken a fancy to him, and tried to reclaim him from his bad habits. To him Franklin went, when he walked out of Keimer's office, and together they talked over their plans for the future. Benjamin was very much inclined to return to his native town, but Hugh would not hear of such a thing. He was quite certain that Keimer would not be able to carry on his business much longer, as he was very deeply in debt, and he proposed that he, Meredith, and Benjamin should get the necessaries from England, and start an opposition printing-office.

As Meredith was not a very good workman, he said he would borrow from his father the money necessary to start the business, as a set-off to Franklin's superior skill. The elder Meredith was grateful to Franklin for his influence over his son, and he willingly advanced £100. A list of articles needed was made, and the order sent to England.

But it happened that Keimer had been asked to prepare some paper money for New Jersey. To whom could he turn for help? He knew full well that there was no one but Franklin who could make

the new cuts and type required, so he sent a message to him, expressing his sorrow for what had occurred, and begging him to come back.

By the advice of his future partner, Franklin returned to Keimer's office, and made the first copper-plate press that was ever seen in America, besides cutting several ornaments for the bills.

Keimer and he went together to Burlington to execute this order, and while there, Franklin became known to all the principal people of the place.

The Assembly had appointed a certain number of the most important gentlemen to act as a committee to watch the printing of this paper-money, and to make sure that no more than the right quantity was issued. These gentlemen took it in turns to be present with the printers, and each one generally brought a friend or two with him.

"Knowledge is power" said Lord Bacon, and if we were asked to give in one word the chief cause of Franklin's success in life, we should say "Reading." If he had never spent hours over such books as were likely to raise the tone of mind and conversation, to train the brain, and cultivate the best virtues, he would probably never have attracted the notice of so many people far superior to himself. We find him when a mere boy, being entertained by Governors, and now as a young man of twenty-one, his superior conversation showed the committee at Jersey that he was something more than an ordinary printer. They

took an interest in him, and invited him to their houses; whereas Keimer was so ignorant and slovenly, that he was not fit to be seen by any one out of the printing-office.

By the time the paper money was finished, the press and other materials had arrived from England, and Franklin and Meredith started their first venture with a good many doubts. They took a house in Market Street, and helped out their rent by letting part to a glazier and his wife, who could also prepare their food for them. Then they anxiously looked for their first customer. They had not to wait long, fortunately, for George House, a member of the Junto Club, came in one day with a countryman whom he had met in the street, looking for a printing-office.

"This man's five shillings being our first fruits, and coming so seasonably, gave us more pleasure than any money I have since earned," said Franklin, "and from the gratitude I felt towards House, has made me often more ready than perhaps I should have been, to assist young beginners."

Whenever a fresh start is made in any direction, there are always plenty of people ready to look on the dark side and foretell failure; so now Benjamin had to put up with all sorts of gloomy prophecies. But he was sensible enough to know that the future fate of his printing-office depended on his present conduct, so he started with even more than his usual industry, work-

ing till eleven o'clock at night, and beginning again long before his neighbours were up in the morning. This wonderful industry was noticed by many gentlemen as they walked home from their clubs at night, and they took an interest in the printer, which brought him plenty of custom.

All this time Keimer, with his lazy, untidy ways, was getting out of favour with the public, and he was glad to sell a newspaper which he had hitherto conducted, to his rivals. Changing the name, and printing it on good paper with better type, Franklin published the first number of *The Pennsylvania Gazette* on October 21st, 1729, and it soon became a general favourite. The public quickly found out that it was conducted by a man who could handle the pen as well as the type, so here again those early studies over the *Spectator* brought in rich fruit.

Now, for the first time, Franklin gave an example of that independent spirit which made him afterwards brave ruin of fortune and even risk his personal safety, rather than seek shelter under some great man's patronage. He had written an article in which he blamed the actions of some person in power. Two gentlemen called upon him, and telling him that he had greatly offended this man, urged that it was very unwise of him to do so. Franklin listened quietly, and then invited the ambassadors to supper, requesting them to bring their injured friend with them.

He received all three most cordially, and listened

to what they had to say, but still without making the apology they thought necessary. Presently supper was brought in, and to the astonishment of the strangers, this consisted of two puddings made of such coarse meal that it was commonly known as saw-dust, and a big jug of water. Franklin helped them all, and then ate his own portion with great appetite. The three guests tasted the coarse pudding, and tried to look as if they liked it, but utterly failed; and after a few attempts, they laid down their spoons and gave up trying. Franklin then rose from his chair, and said—

"My friends, any one who can subsist on saw-dust pudding and water as I can, needs no man's patronage;"—by which he implied that he would say what he thought right and just, without caring who might be offended by it.

Besides being fond of reading and study, Franklin had a great love of Nature; every tree, every flower, every insect had some beauty in his eyes, and little trifles, which many others might have passed over, had great charms for him. There is a story told about the yellow willow tree, now so common in America, which shows his keen observation.

It is said that he saw an old basket made of willow lying in a ditch: it had evidently come from abroad, and Franklin noticed that it was sprouting here and there; so he gave orders that some of the twigs should be planted. They grew up well, and

this is supposed to be the origin of the tree which is now so well known in America.

A somewhat similar story has been told of the poet Pope — whose famous willow in the garden of his house at Twickenham is supposed to have been the parent of all the weeping willows which now give so much beauty to the Thames. Whether Pope's anecdote was borrowed from Franklin, or Franklin's from Pope, or whether the circumstances really occurred in both countries, we cannot now decide.

Amongst other insects, Franklin was especially fond of watching the ants at work; and one result of his careful observations was, that he believed that these little insects had some way of telling their thoughts to each other. It was a great feature in his character that he never took anything for granted. If he had an idea he tried to reduce it to a fact, so now he set to work to prove this theory of his. He put a pot of treacle in a cupboard, knowing that the sweetness would soon attract the clever little ants. Then he turned them all out but one, hung the pot to a nail in the ceiling by a piece of string, and watched.

Presently the imprisoned ant wanted to get out, and, after running round and round the pot in a great state of excitement, it found the string, and by doing a little tight-rope performance, made its way to the ceiling; then it travelled down the wall, and rejoined its companions. In about half an hour, Franklin

found the pot was once more full of ants, and therefore he concluded that, although these insects are silent, they must have some means of expressing their ideas, which we human beings know not of.

It will be remembered that it was the powerful wording of Franklin's letter to his brother, which brought him under notice of Governor Keith when he was only eighteen. The pamphlet which he wrote in London brought him in contact with many literary men who were in future years to be counted amongst his friends; so now the articles which made the *Gazette* so popular generally came from his pen. Soon after the paper was started, another advantage arose from his being able to write well. More paper money was wanted, and the Province was divided on the subject, for while the poor people were anxious for the increase, the rich people were entirely against it.

Franklin immediately set his pen to work, and wrote and published an anonymous pamphlet on "The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency," which made such an impression on the public, that the vote was passed in the Assembly, and Franklin was employed to provide the new supply. He could make his own ink, cut woodcuts or type, and carve ornaments; he was therefore able to undertake any order of the kind.

Soon after this the partnership with Meredith was dissolved. The latter was really of little use, for he

was a bad workman even when sober—which was, unfortunately, very seldom—and much preferred farming to printing. So Franklin agreed to pay back the hundred pounds advanced by Meredith's father, and gave Hugh thirty pounds and a new saddle, in return for which young Meredith promised to make no further claim on the business. Hitherto, in spite of Franklin's industry, he could do little more than keep out of debt, but from the time of Meredith's departure he began to be more and more prosperous.

He set to work with his old spirit of independence, caring nothing what people thought of him so long as he was doing his duty. His talents had brought him into some of the best society in the place, yet he would wheel a barrow full of paper through the streets, without trying to avoid his more fashionable companions. He was always carefully dressed, and whatever he did, no blush of false shame came on his cheek, for he knew he was doing what he felt he ought.

He next started a stationer's shop, where he sold books, besides often binding them for customers. He made and sold ink, not to mention groceries, and other odds and ends, yet his printing-office gradually became the meeting-place of a number of learned men.

By this time Franklin began to feel the need of a wife to help him in his varied work, and as his first

love, Miss Read, was now a widow, they were married in 1730. She was a sensible, affectionate woman, and did her best to help her husband in every way.

Although Franklin had now a good business, he lived with great care, and for years he breakfasted on bread-and-milk, which he ate with a wooden spoon from an earthenware bowl. But one day he was surprised to find a china basin and silver spoon, for which his wife had paid twenty-three shillings, because she thought that her husband deserved those luxuries as much as his neighbours. Franklin quaintly notes in his autobiography, that this was the first appearance of plate or china in his house, "which afterwards, in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value."

Mindful of the saying that "Early to bed, early to rise, will make a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," Benjamin Franklin rose always at five o'clock. After saying his prayers, he mapped out his work for the day—a practice which cannot be too strongly recommended to busy people if they would avoid being in a muddle; then he studied for an hour and a half before going into the printing-office, where he worked from eight to six o'clock, with the exception of one hour for dinner. The evening he spent either in study, or in conversation with friends, till ten o'clock, when he retired to bed.

CHAPTER V.

ALWAYS TO THE FORE.

It was a striking feature in Franklin's character that he was so thoroughly practical; he never made a discovery in science or philosophy without immediately setting to work to see what good could be got out of it for everyday life; then he was so generous, that as soon as he had become to a certain extent prosperous he kept looking back, as it were, to see what other struggling fellow men he could help.

Doubtless he remembered well his early days, when he had found so much difficulty in getting books, and he now began the first of many acts for the public good which were to rank him among the first philanthropists of his day.

The Junto club was still flourishing, and its members were the first to join in Franklin's scheme to start a Public Subscription Library. By untiring perseverance, in five months Franklin succeeded in getting fifty subscribers, at forty shillings each, who promised to contribute also ten shillings per annum for fifty years. The larger sum was spent in buying books to start with, and the smaller was to meet the ordinary expenses of each year. He then obtained a Charter for the library, in 1731, and many valuable presents of books, money, and curiosities, poured in.

Nor was this all; other people heard of this undertaking, and libraries were formed after the same plan in many towns. Thus the little scheme of the "Leather Apron Club" became a help to the whole nation, as nothing of the kind had ever been known in America before. Before Franklin's death there were 5,487 books in the Philadelphia Library, and by 1861 there were 70,000.

As may be supposed, the founder made great use of the library, and for twenty years he devoted an hour or two every day to reading.

Events now trod upon each other's heels in Franklin's life, and no sooner was one plan well started than he looked out for another. In 1732 he published an Almanac, under the name of Richard Saunders; it was such a success that three editions were sold before the end of January. "Poor Richard," as the Almanac was afterwards called, appeared every January for twenty-five years, and about ten thousand copies were sold each year. It was full of short witty sayings, conveying home truths in such a pleasant way that people enjoyed reading them, and never thought they were being taught anything. Here are a few of the maxims which were at the time in every one's mouth, for "Poor Richard," was translated into French, Spanish, and modern Greek.

"The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?"

"He is no clown who drives the plough, but he who does clownish things."

"It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright."

"After getting the first hundred pounds, it is more easy to get the second."

"Great talkers, little doers."

"Tongue double, brings trouble."

"Are you angry that others disappoint you? Remember that you cannot depend upon yourself."

"Take this remark from Richard, poor and lame, whate'er's begun in anger, ends in shame."

"Diligence is the mother of good luck."

"The nearest way to come at glory, is to do for Conscience what we do for glory."

"Hast thou virtue? Acquire also the graces and beauties of virtue."

As time went on Franklin began to wish to learn some other language beside his own, so he next set to work to teach himself French and Italian. He had a great friend who was also studying the latter language, and with whom he used often to play chess in the evening.

Franklin was so fond of this game that he found he spent more time at it than he could rightly spare from his languages, so he declined to play any more unless his friend would agree that the one who conquered should give his adversary a task of grammar or translation, which the other should do before the next battle was fought. "As we played pretty

equally," writes Franklin, "we soon beat one another into the language."

After this he began learning Spanish and Latin. All this time he was working for the pure love of study, little thinking he was laying up treasures against the time when he should mix with grandees at foreign Courts who were as far above him as the Benjamin Franklin who founded the Philadelphia Library and edited the best paper in the country was above the little leader of the band of stone stealers.

Before we go any farther in Franklin's life we must learn a little of the history of the colony which he was some day to rule. For the sake of those of our readers who do not care for that sort of study, we will make it as short as possible; but a slight knowledge of the history of the place is necessary to understand the events which follow.

King Charles II. of England had given to William Penn 26,000,000 acres of land—which were thenceforth called Pennsylvania—on condition that he should send every year to Windsor Castle, two beaver skins, and one fifth of the gold and silver found on the estate. Penn also promised to govern the province in accordance with the laws of England. He had power himself to pardon petty crimes, and to appoint magistrates, but he could make no law or tax without the consent of a body of freemen of the place, called the Assembly. The members of the Assembly were

chosen from among the people of Pennsylvania by votes, much as English Members of Parliament are now, and they, with William Penn, governed the province, the King of England still having power to alter laws made by them if he chose.

On his death William Penn left his little kingdom to his three sons; but as one died, Thomas and Richard were left sole owners. They lived in England, and sent out a Governor to manage their affairs, and look after their rights. They considered that they ought to be free from all taxes, and although £218,000 were raised at one time to defend Pennsylvania from the ravages of the Indians, the owners or Proprietaries as they were called, refused to pay a penny. As the Assembly represented the people of Pennsylvania, it is little to be wondered at that the Governor and that body were almost continually at war. After this brief sketch we may return to Franklin, whom we find in 1736 making his first appearance in public life, as Clerk of the General Assembly mentioned above.

The appointment only lasted a year, but at the end of that time Benjamin was re-elected. He found that one gentleman had voted against him; and this vexed him so much, that he determined, if possible, to win over his opponent, especially as he was a man noted for his learning as well as his wealth. After some time Franklin heard that the gentleman had a very rare book in his library, so he wrote a polite note, and begged the favour of the loan of it for a

few days. The book was sent, and in due time Benjamin returned it with a letter of thanks. The next time they met, the gentleman greeted the Clerk of the Assembly with great politeness, and in time they became firm friends.

Some people have blamed Franklin for this action, but although we are by no means disposed to make our hero appear a piece of perfection, we can only see in this the sensitiveness and unvarying good temper which characterised him through life.

The following advertisement which appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* on June 23rd, 1737, is another proof of his gentleness and wit.

"Taken out of a pew in the church some months since, a Common Prayer Book, bound in red, gilt, and lettered D. F. (Deborah Franklin) on each cover. The person who took it is desired to open it and read the eighth commandment, and afterwards return it into the same pew again, upon which no further notice will be taken."

The printer Bradford, already referred to, had formerly been the Postmaster of Philadelphia, but not having been regular in his accounts, the appointment was offered to Franklin in 1737. He accepted it, as he always did anything that was offered. As he says, "'I never seek an office, I never refuse one, and I never resign one."

Anybody might have supposed that Franklin's time was now more than filled up; but his practical mind was always looking out for the public good.

Accordingly, he started a scheme for improving the system of constables at night, which was so effectual that Philadelphia soon became one of the best regulated cities. There was, however, one great omission in the public arrangements, there was no means of protection or rescue from fire. Franklin formed a Fire Company, in which every member bound himself to keep a certain number of buckets, bags, and baskets, ready for use. The members met once every month, to discuss the best means of preventing and subduing fires. As with the Library, there were many offshoots from this scheme, though the "Union Fire Company" was always the most popular. Certain fines were paid by those who were absent from the meetings, and the money thus gained was spent in buying engines, ladders, &c., until in time, owing to the noble efforts of one man, Philadelphia became well provided against fire.

Remembering that it is better to be taught in the early years of life, and knowing that there was no college at Philadelphia, Franklin longed to establish an Academy for the education of the young, but as there were at that time rumours of war, he found no one willing to take up his scheme, and it was put on one side, though he managed, in 1744, to establish a Philosophical Society. Of all his projects this was, perhaps, the one which gave him most pleasure; for he delighted in all kinds of science and philosophy, and spent many hours in experiments. As we intend

devoting the next chapter to these, we will leave them for the present, and follow Franklin in another direction.

Already he was beginning to take his place as the most noted character in Philadelphia. Many others might be as clever, and as generous; but there was no one who devoted his talents and his generosity to the public good as he did. He was the first man to notice how defenceless Philadelphia was. There were no fortifications of any kind, and it was rumoured that there was not a cannon in all Pennsylvania that would be of any use in case of war. Instead of contenting himself, as many might have done, by thinking that it was no business of his, he wrote a pamphlet called "Plain Truth," which roused his fellow countrymen to action. War was raging in Europe between England, Spain, and France, and there was every reason to fear that the French and the Indians might attack the English colonies in America. Franklin stated these facts boldly in his pamphlet, and urged the people to unite for the defence of the city, and in the training of volunteers. A universal cry was raised that he himself should form the association. A public meeting was held, and so deeply did he stir the hearts of his fellow townsmen, that 1,200 people joined then and there; and before long this force of militia spread all over the country, and numbered 10,000. Benjamin was chosen Colonel of the Philadelphia regiment, but declined the offer, as he considered he was unfit for it; so he contented himself with providing mottoes and

devices for each regiment, and did duty as a common soldier at the batteries which were raised.

It was about this time that he invented the Franklin stove, and being advised to take out a patent for it, he refused, saying that, "As we enjoy great advantages from inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve them by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously."

When peace was restored, Franklin's thoughts went back to the Academy. Once more the Junto Club came to the front; and, by their advice, he wrote a pamphlet on the education of youth in Philadelphia. He distributed this gratis; then, when he thought his words had taken root, he started a subscription for building and supporting an Academy. In this, and in all other similar plans, he never asked for contributions in his own name, as he learnt by experience that people were always more willing to give if he pleaded as the messenger of some "public-spirited gentlemen." He did not mind being put in the background, so long as he gained his object, and he was rejoiced indeed when the Academy was opened in 1749. It soon became so popular that it outgrew the first house, and a larger building had to be provided. After a time a school was added, in which one hundred children were to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, for nothing.

Having taken a partner in his business, Franklin now thought that he would be able to devote himself

to philosophical studies; but the public would not hear of this. They appointed him Justice of the Peace, Common Councilman and Alderman, and finally he was chosen by the citizens to represent them in the Assembly. When he took his seat, his son William was appointed Clerk in his place.

There are so many hospitals now in England and America, that it seems quite strange to think that there was a time when there were none of these havens of rest for the sick poor. A certain Dr. Bond tried to start a scheme for building a hospital at Philadelphia; but he found that every one asked what Benjamin Franklin thought of the plan, and so great an influence had he gained over the public mind that no one would subscribe when they heard that he had not been consulted. Hearing of this, Franklin not only subscribed liberally himself, but set to work amongst his friends, and finally obtained a grant of £2,000 from the Assembly. The inscription for the foundation stone was written by Franklin:—"In the year of Christ, 1755; George II. happily reigning (for he sought the happiness of his people), Philadelphia flourishing (for its inhabitants were public spirited). This building, by the bounty of the Government, and of many private persons, was piously founded for the relief of the sick and miserable. May the God of Mercies bless the undertaking."

Many people who have the power and will to do *great* things in the world are quite indifferent to the

trifles of everyday life. The man who can write a wonderful book, or paint a beautiful picture, is often untidy, if not even dirty, in his home and dress; and the woman who would bear a great pain or grief without a murmur, often makes all around her miserable by her complaints over the little worries of everyday life; but Franklin was not of this character.

To the man who could feel that "human happiness is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune which seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day," the cleaning of the streets was as important as the defence of the city.

Having seen the Library, Fire Company, Militia, Academy, and Hospital, in full work, he began to think it was a disgrace that a town which was so beautifully built, should be so bespattered with mud that people could not walk in comfort. He first succeeded in getting some pavement put down in one of the principal streets for foot-passengers; then, seeing how soon it became splashed, on account of the terrible state of the roads, he found a man who was willing to clean the pavement twice a week, and carry off all the rubbish that might be about, provided the tenant of each house paid him 6d. a month.

The people were so delighted with the novel cleanliness that they gladly paid the amount asked, and before long, Benjamin brought in a Bill for paving the whole city. Another gentleman suggested lighting it, and lamps were sent for from London. They were

round globes which could be rendered useless by a single blow, and the smoke not being able to escape, they soon became dim. Franklin, who did not see any good in philosophy unless it could be employed for domestic comfort, set his busy brain to work, and suggested that four flat panes of glass would be better than the globe, as one could easily be replaced if broken, and that crevices should be left below to make a draught. In this way, with the help of a funnel, the lamp remained bright all night.

Franklin, with Sir William Hunter, was appointed to the office of Postmaster-General of all the American colonies in 1753, and used all his energies to make the business a paying one for the Home Government. Hitherto it had been a losing concern, but the two new Postmasters worked so well that, after a time, the Government received three times as much from the colonies as from Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

WAR AND PEACE.

THE war which had so long been dreaded now broke out, and the English and French were fighting in America. The French interfered with the fisheries of the colonies, and estranged the Indians, besides which they were preparing to hem in the English by a line of forts. As soon as it was known that war

was really imminent, Franklin drew up a plan for the union of the colonies. He wrote an article as well, and illustrated it in his own witty fashion ; there was the picture of a snake cut into pieces, each of which bore the name of one of the colonies, and underneath was written in big letters "Join or die."

The colonies did join, and Franklin was appointed General by the Governor of Pennsylvania, and went, with a little band of five hundred and fifty volunteers, to build forts on the North West Frontier in December, 1755. Many times during his military command Franklin found that it was difficult to keep the men contented if they were not fully employed. This put him in mind, he said, "of a sea captain whose rule it was to keep his men constantly at work, and when the mate once told him they had done everything, and there was nothing further to employ them about, 'Oh,' said he, 'make them scour the anchor!'"

Although the colony was put to great expense by this war, the Proprietaries refused to pay a single penny towards the taxes which were raised to supply the necessary means of defence. It is not very surprising then, that by the time three forts were built, the poor worried Governor sent for Franklin to resume his place in the Assembly, hoping to get some support from him. But Franklin was far too public-spirited to throw his influence in the same scale as the Proprietaries and Governors, and stated in earnest, eloquent words, the injustice of the owners taking all and

giving nothing. This subject was soon to be discussed again, and to invest Franklin with new importance and heavy responsibilities.

Whenever there was any public danger to be faced, or public good to be worked, Franklin always took care to impress upon the people the need for union and forbearance, knowing well that many a good cause is lost through squabbles and divisions.

He had at one time a snake with two heads preserved in spirits, and used to amuse his friends by asking what would have happened to the snake if one head had always chosen to go over some obstructing twig, while the other persisted in going under. It would probably have died of thirst or starvation.

Soon after his return from the forts, Franklin was made Colonel of the regiment, which numbered 1,200 men, and had six brass cannon. He was so popular, that when he was starting on a trip to Virginia, all the officers came up as he was mounting his horse, and escorted him as far as the ferry. When this reached the ears of the Proprietaries in England, they were very angry, because they had never been so honoured. Their feeling of resentment was much increased when they found that Franklin was chosen by the Assemby to go as Commissioner to London, and present a petition to the King to do away with the proprietary rights, and put the two Penns more on a footing with the people of Pennsylvania.

On April 4th, 1757, Franklin started from Phila-

delphia, with his son William, but owing to various causes, the vessel did not sail from New York for six weeks. Thus it was that he who as a poor boy had hurried his meals and shortened his nights that he might have time to study books which he borrowed and returned by stealth, was now sent to represent his country at the English Court.

Many years before Josiah Franklin had taught his children the saying of Solomon, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings," and Franklin little thought as he learnt the words, that he would, in time, literally stand before five crowned heads and sit down to dinner with one.

Little did he suspect either the cordial welcome which would be given to him by all the scientific men in England, with many of whom he already corresponded. And now, before we follow him on his way to London, we will speak of a few of the experiments which had already made his name well known in philosophical circles. As we have said, Franklin's first object in studying science, politics, or economy, was to increase human well-being and comfort. One snowy day he took a number of pieces of different coloured cloth from a tailor's pattern-card, and laid them all out on the snow when the sun was shining. "In a few hours," he writes, "the black being warmed most by the sun, was sunk so low as to be below the stroke of the sun's rays; the dark blue almost as low; the light blue not quite so much as the dark; the other

colours less, as they were lighter; and the quite white remained on the surface of the snow, not having entered it at all. What signifies philosophy that does not apply to some use? May we not learn from this that black clothes are not so fit to wear in a hot, sunny climate or season, as white ones?" From those little pieces of coloured cloth Franklin also suggested the white helmet, which, however, was not used for many years afterwards.

Mention has already been made of the various presents which were given to the Philadelphian Library. A certain Dr. Spence had sent some electric tubes from England; and when Franklin had taken a partner, and found more leisure for study, he spent much of it in experiments in electricity. In 1749 he published a series of fifty-six observations which he had made on thunder gusts, to be followed soon by a more important paper: "Opinions and Conjectures concerning the Properties and Effects of the Electrical Matter, and the Means of Preserving Buildings, Ships, &c. from Lightning."

In this last essay we find the first suggestion of the lightning-conductors which are now so common in every land; but although he made patient experiments for six years, to prove that lightning was electricity, and could be attracted by the same substances, no one would erect conductors. At last, in 1752, he made an experiment with a kite, which settled the question for ever.

One day in spring, when the clouds were heavy with thunder, Franklin and his son went into a field, carrying a kite with them. It was made of a large silk handkerchief (silk being a non-conductor), and at the top of the stick which ran up it was fastened a piece of pointed iron. Keenly sensitive to ridicule, yet never losing his temper when exposed to it, Benjamin stole away to an old cowshed to avoid the laughter of his friends. The string of the kite was made of hemp, at the end of which a common key was tied, and a piece of silk formed a safe non-conductor by which to hold the kite.

Up it went, amid a roar of thunder and a flash of lightning, while father and son waited patiently, till they began to despair of any result from their experiment. At last, the fibres of the hempen string began to stand upright, and trembling with anxiety, Franklin knocked the key with his knuckle, and found a real spark of electricity. He charged what is called a Leyden jar with it, then pulled down his kite and went home happy, for he had proved that which he had long believed—that lightning is electricity.

The printer-philosopher was soon astounded to hear that his pamphlet on the means of preserving buildings from lightning had been translated into French, and that the experiments had been tried in France, where lightning had been safely carried to the ground by means of an iron rod. A member of the Royal Society of England introduced Franklin's

theory there, but it was at first laughed at. In 1750 the clever paper already mentioned arrived in England, and was published with some others in pamphlet form by the Editor of the *Englishman's Magazine.*

This pamphlet was translated into French, German, Italian, and Latin, and caused the author to be made a Member of the Royal Society without paying any fees; and the following year the Copley Medal was presented to him. His own country was not to be left behind in showing honour to the self-made man, and the M.A. degree was given to him by Harvard and Yale Colleges "for his discoveries and improvements in the electric branch of natural philosophy."

From the observation of lightning to the preparing of earth for seed, is a very wide jump; but it is to Franklin that we owe the use of plaster of Paris for fertilising fields. No one took much notice of this idea of his; so being determined to teach the public by hook or by crook, he wrote in plaster on a field which was close to the high road—"This has been plastered." By-and-by the plaster disappeared, but the splendid verdure of the field spoke for itself to the numerous people who had seen those four words, and doubtless had more effect upon them than hours of argument.

Amongst many other clever inventions of this great man we may mention a stove, constructed in 1772, for consuming its own smoke; a rolling-press for taking copies of letters, &c.; and spectacles,

which, though common enough now, were unknown in his day—in which the upper part was suited to the sight for looking about, while the lower was for reading. He had in his library an artificial arm and hand of his own designing, by which he could take down and replace books on high shelves.

Nearly seventeen weeks had passed since Franklin and his son left Philadelphia yet the departure of the vessel was put off week by week through the procrastination of Lord Loudoun, the Commander-in-chief. Most people would have grumbled heartily under such tiresome circumstances; but Franklin made the best of everything in life, and was as happy as possible in New York. When at last the London packet was allowed to start, she was ordered to keep with a fleet of ninety-six sail, which was bound for an attack on the French at Louisburg, and five more days passed before she was allowed to leave her warlike companions. Those last few days, which would have seemed so tiresome to most people, produced one of Franklin's most useful experiments. His watchful eye had noticed that the wakes of two vessels were very smooth, while the other parts of the sea were ruffled by the wind. Asking the captain the reason of this, he was told in a somewhat scornful tone, that probably the cooks of the two ships were emptying the greasy water through the scuppers.

Franklin at first thought this suggestion

absurd; but presently a quotation from Pliny came into his mind, in which the seamen were represented as stilling the waves with oil; and, after much thought, he subsequently made some experiments in England on the Derwentwater, and also on a pond at Clapham. He was surprised at first to see how far the oil would spread on the water, so that a few drops would cover a large surface if they met with no obstruction. Then, after much study, he published a paper on the subject, in which he explains the reason why oil should soothe troubled waters.

As every one knows, the waves are made by the wind, which blows the water into ridges. "The oil-drops repel each other," says Franklin, "and are repelled by the water, so that they do not mingle with it; therefore they expand, and diffuse themselves over the water until they meet with some obstruction, covering the water with a thin and continuous film: the wind slides over this film without coming in contact with the water, and so the waves subside."

One other experiment of a very different nature may be mentioned here; and then we must follow Franklin in his second voyage across the Atlantic.

He had heard that flies could be revived by the sun, even after they were to all appearances dead. One day he opened a bottle of Madeira, and three flies fell into his wine glass. As they had been shut up in the wine for a long time, he thought they would

be good subjects for experiment, and put them at once on a sieve in the sun, that the wine might drain off. In less than three-quarters of an hour two began to show signs of life. "They commenced by some convulsive motions of the thighs, at length raised themselves upon their legs, wiped their eyes with their fore-feet, and brushed their wings with their hind-feet, and soon began to fly.

CHAPTER VII.

A WILLING EXILE.

So once more we see Franklin on his way to England, but how different are his prospects from what they were when he landed there nearly thirty-three years ago. Then he was an unknown youth, with only a few pounds in his pocket; now, he went as the representative of his country; and the fame of his writings and discoveries had gone as an outrider before him, preparing a way which led him to many a lordly mansion. Great indeed was the change, and yet what Franklin did, any man of ordinary talent can do, provided he have the diligence and uprightness which were the main points in his character.

The voyage was long and tedious, but at last the welcome shores of England were in sight. Darkness, however, came on, with a thick fog; and just about

midnight, when the captain and most of the passengers were asleep, the fog suddenly lifted, and Franklin, with a few others, saw the lighthouse, which told of danger, within a few rods of them. There was among the passengers a captain of the Royal Navy, who fortunately was on deck; without a moment's hesitation he sprang to the helm, and shouted to the sailors to *wear ship*, or in other words, to turn her round, and so, at the risk of snapping every mast, he brought the vessel round, and saved it and the people on board.

Now Franklin knew that there was not a single lighthouse on the American coast, and he was so deeply impressed by this narrow escape, that he made up his mind he would set to work to have the shores protected directly he returned. Landing at Falmouth on Sunday morning, the voyagers, who had thus been saved almost by a miracle, went straight to the church, and returned thanks to God for His great mercy.

No express trains were running in those days, and Franklin and his son had to post 250 miles to London. As their road lay through some of the most lovely parts of England, they were charmed with the beauty of what they still loved to call their mother country.

Franklin's first business was to call on the Proprietaries, Thomas and Richard Penn, and his interview was by no means pleasant. He represented to them the grievances of the people over whom they were petty kings with more than an English king's authority;

for, though the Royal Charter gave the Assembly the power to make laws, the Proprietaries deprived it of that power. The Royal Charter allowed the Assembly to grant or withhold supplies, but the Proprietaries would not allow that right to be exercised. Then he told them how unfair it was that their large estates should not be taxed, while every other person in Pennsylvania had to pay his share towards public expenses. Finally, he begged them to consider these grievances, and redress them.

To us, at this distance of time, the petition seems reasonable enough; but despotism had not then been utterly banished, for the Penn brothers declared that it was insolent, and they would have nothing to say to the man who could be the bearer of such a message.

With his usual quiet good temper, Benjamin Franklin simply referred the matter to the Lords of Trade, and the King's Council, and then patiently waited for the result. His own great wish in those days, was to turn Pennsylvania into a Royal Province, but the Proprietaries were too strong for him; still he stayed in England till the moment should come when he could strike a blow for his country. It came after months of waiting. The Assembly had passed a bill to raise a sum of 500,000 dollars by a *tax on all estates.* This, of course, included the Penn brothers among the tax-payers, and when the bill came to England to receive the king's consent, it was repealed, as it was

thought to be a dangerous step. The Speaker of the Assembly wrote to Franklin in great distress:

"We are among rocks and sands, in a stormy season. It depends upon you to do everything in your power in the present crisis. It is too late for us to give you any assistance."

Never was there a man more fit to be trusted at such a time. When Franklin first heard the news of the English Government's decision he was starting on a pleasure trip to Ireland. Without a moment's hesitation he unpacked his saddle bags, and going to Lord Mansfield, actually succeeded, after great efforts, in getting the British Lords of Commission to vote that the Act of the Assembly should not be repealed. If Franklin had never done anything else in his life, he would not have lived in vain; for henceforth the Proprietaries had to bear their share in taxation.

So much for Franklin's public work whilst in England; now let us see what he did in his private character. First of all he visited the little village of Ecton, near Banbury, where his father had lived, and sought out all who were in any way connected with him. Most were in humble life, many were really poor, but no shadow of pride came between them and their prosperous relation, and finding one Thomas Franklin in actual want, he not only gave him money, but adopted his daughter Sally, and took care of her till she married.

He also travelled about in England, Scotland, and

Ireland. At Cambridge he astonished the greatest philosophers by some entirely novel experiments; he was made Doctor of Laws of Oxford, St. Andrews and Edinburgh, and at the last named place he was presented with the freedom of the city. In short, before many years passed away, he who was once a mere printer's drudge became a member of nearly all the scientific and literary societies in England and America.

Dr. Franklin lived, while in London, at No. 7, Craven Street, Strand, and one day he saw a poor sickly-looking woman sweeping the pavement in front of the house. She seemed so ill that his tender heart felt for her at once, and he asked who employed her to do that work. "Nobody," was the answer, "but I am in distress, and I sweeps before gentlefolk's doors and hopes they will give me something." Dr. Franklin told her at once to sweep the whole street clean, and he would give her a shilling. That was at nine o'clock, and he was surprised to find she came for the shilling at midday. This set him thinking how easily the streets might be cleaned by strong men, if a poor weak woman could do it so quickly, and he then and there drew up a plan for sweeping and cleaning London and Westminster.

His room at Craven Street was the resort of the most clever men of the day, who came to talk with him on philosophy, and to see his experiments, for he possessed amongst other things, the larg[redacted]

electric battery then known. This very battery gave him one or two unpleasant shocks. Being aware of the wonderful power of electricity, he thought of a scheme which has within the last few years been suggested again, namely, whether it would not be a merciful and quick means of killing animals when necessary.

Accordingly, he undertook to kill a turkey by an electric shock; but by some bad management he received the charge himself, and was knocked flat on the floor, much to his own surprise doubtless, and the turkey was saved from being a victim of science. Although Franklin became insensible, and felt the effects for more than twenty-four hours, he still continued his experiments, and was soon afterwards knocked down again, when attempting to give a shock to a paralytic person.

There was another amusement of Franklin's which we have not yet mentioned; he was passionately fond of music, and could play well on the harp, guitar, violin, and violoncello. When he was in London he saw the musical glasses, which had only lately been invented, and was so much pleased with the music produced, that he gave a great deal of time and study to the improvement of it. After some time he invented the Harmonica, which was more convenient to play, and had a greater compass of notes. This instrument was very popular for some years.

In 1760 he received a letter from the Speaker of the Assembly telling him that he had been appointed

to receive a Government grant of £130,000, and to invest it as he thought proper. (Owing to the expenses to which the colonies had been put by the long wars with the Indians and French, the English Government had paid them £200,000 a-year, and the amount just mentioned had been voted to Pennsylvania and Delaware.) We only mention this circumstance as a proof of the entire confidence which every one had in his integrity and judgment.

As the time drew near for his return to America, his English friends were most anxious to keep him with them. One gentleman wrote, "I am very sorry that you intend soon to leave our hemisphere. America has sent us many good things, gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, &c., but you are the first philosopher, and, indeed the first man of letters for whom we are beholden to her. It is our own fault that we have not kept him, whence it appears that we do not agree with Solomon that 'wisdom is above gold,' for we take care never to send back an ounce of the latter, which we once lay our fingers upon."

Dr. Franklin's reply shows his character as well as anything we have yet read of his.

"Your compliment of gold and silver," he writes, is very obliging to me, but a little injurious to your country. The various value of everything in every part of this world arises, you know, from the various proportions of the quality and the demand. We are told that gold and silver in Solomon's time were so plentiful as to

be of no more value in his country than the stones in the street. You have here at present, just such a plenty of wisdom. Your people are, therefore, not to be censured, for desiring no more among them than they have; and if I have any, I should certainly carry it where, from its scarcity, it may probably come to a better market."

In August, 1762, Dr. Franklin started for the home to which his thoughts had turned so many times. Although he was eagerly sought after by the most fashionable as well as the most learned people, and could count amongst his intimate friends such men as Hume, Robertson, and Lord Kames, Franklin told his wife that his uneasiness at being absent from his family, and the longing desire to be with them, made him often sigh in the midst of cheerful company. He arrived at Philadelphia on November 1st, had a most enthusiastic welcome, and received the thanks of the Assembly, with a present of 15,000 dollars (about £3,000), for the work he had done.

Here we may pause for a moment, to say that Dr. Franklin's parents were both dead before he was sent on his first mission to England. Josiah Franklin died in 1744, and his wife in 1750, so although their youngest son was becoming a man of note, they neither of them saw him at the height of his fame.

An amusing incident is told by one of Dr. Franklin's biographers, and although it is doubted by others, it may be given here.

It is said, that after his father's death, Benjamin Franklin went over to Boston to see his mother. He had been absent many years; during which Mrs. Franklin had suffered a good deal with her eyes. Benjamin had heard that a mother is always supposed to recognise her own child, so he thought he would just see if it were true in this case.

One dull, chilly day in January, Benjamin Franklin knocked at his mother's door, and asked for Mrs. Franklin. He found the old lady sitting by the fire knitting; and telling her that he had heard of her hospitality to strangers, he asked if she would give him a bed for the night.

Mrs. Franklin told him rather coldly, that although a few members of the Assembly boarded with her, she did not keep a tavern. As the day was rough and cold, she, however, invited the stranger to sit down and warm himself for a time.

When the other gentlemen came in, Franklin had some coffee with them, then began talking in such an amusing way, that no one thought of asking him to leave. When the supper was announced at eight o'clock, Benjamin coolly seated himself at the table; and after the meal, poor Mrs. Franklin seeing no chance of ridding herself of this tiresome guest, consulted one of the boarders.

He suggested that the stranger should be called aside, and quietly informed that Mrs. Franklin could not possibly give him a bed in her house, and that the

sooner he took himself off the better. Benjamin replied that he did not wish to disturb anyone, and would just smoke one pipe more, and then say good-bye; but his conversation was so amusing that it was eleven o'clock before he attempted to move.

By this time, Mrs. Franklin had lost patience, and she told the stranger plainly that he must leave the house.

Benjamin apologised, and putting on his coat opened the door, and looked out into the night; the street was knee-deep in snow.

"My dear madam," said Franklin; "can you turn me out in this dreadful storm? I am a stranger in this town, and shall certainly perish in the streets. You look like a charitable lady; I should not think you could turn a dog from your door on this tempestuous night."

The old lady was not much pleased by this speech, but she consented at the request of the boarders to allow the stranger to sleep there, for that night; but she took care to carry all the articles of value into her own room, giving the negro servant orders to sleep with his clothes on, and to take a cleaver to bed with him, so that he might seize the man if he made any attempt to plunder the house.

Mrs. Franklin and her servants were up early, and went at once into the parlour, where they found the stranger fast asleep in a chair. Being convinced by this that he was not a thief in disguise, the old lady

woke him up with a cheerful "Good morning," asked him how he had slept, and invited him to have some breakfast. We are not told how Benjamin made himself known to his mother; we may be sure, however, they both had a good laugh over the adventure.

But we must leave the past, and return to Franklin, who, now at the age of fifty-seven, thought he would be left in peace to devote himself to that which he loved best in this world, the study of science; especially, as the long seven years' war was ended by the Treaty of Paris, and peace seemed to reign in Europe and at sea. But, alas! The Indians had turned upon Pennsylvania, to revenge the wrongs which they had suffered during the war between the English and French, and had committed so many outrages, that the very name of Indian came to be hated, and it was agreed by the colonists that they must be annihilated. The work was begun by a band of horsemen from a place called Paxton, who surrounded a village which had always been friendly to the colonists. There were but twenty people in all, and only six were at home at the time of the attack; they were killed and scalped, and the village set on fire. The other fourteen were captured afterwards by the magistrates, and put into a place of safety, but the cruel avengers forced their way in, and butchered all the poor creatures, although they declared with truth that they had always loved the white men. It will hardly be believed that almost every one approved of this terrible murder,

and only a few took the trouble to protest very coldly against it.

But Dr. Franklin was a man of large heart, who could take up the cause of those oppressed, even at the risk of his popularity; so he now wrote an indignant appeal to the better feelings of his countrymen. In spite of this, a party of some hundreds of fanatics set out for Philadelphia, to destroy one hundred and forty Moravian Indians who had taken shelter there. The Governor was terrified, and sent to Franklin for help and advice; the latter immediately formed an association of defence, and took command of one thousand men. Riding out to meet the would-be murderers, he told them that they could not possibly succeed, for even the Quakers, who considered it wrong to take up arms, had worked in the trenches for the defence of the poor hunted Indians. The insurgents then went away, but the Governor, half-jealous of Franklin's influence, and angry at having put himself under an obligation to him, made friends with the insurgents, refused to punish them, and actually offered a reward for the scalps and bodies of Indian men and women, besides henceforth becoming Franklin's enemy.

A certain number of Pennsylvanians took the side of the Governor and the Paxton men, while others declared themselves the friends of the humane Franklin. And so, for the first time in his life, Dr. Franklin was assailed with storms of abuse from those who put in their lot with the Governor.

Perfectly indifferent to the accusations made against him, Franklin now set his pen to work again, and wrote a pamphlet which was read far and wide, urging that the King of England should buy the Province from the Penns, and govern it after the same manner as other royal colonies. When the Assembly met again, three thousand citizens signed a petition that this change should be made, but the Penns sent up a counter-petition, and Pennsylvania remained as it always had been, though the feud in the Assembly grew stronger than ever.

Franklin was now (1764) chosen Speaker, but in the following autumn he was turned out by a majority of twenty-five votes in four thousand. A more important office was, however, given to him—namely, to go once more to England. This time he went with two objects. The first was to petition for a change of government; the second, to carry a remonstrance from all the people against the unfairness of the Americans paying heavy taxes to the English Government, and yet having no representative in the Houses of Parliament. This is too difficult a question to enter into at length here, but it must be mentioned, because this grievance (and now every one agrees that it was a grievance) was the first seed of the dissensions between the American Colonies and the mother country, which grew and grew, till they divided parent and child, and ended in the establishment of the Independence of the United States.

Dr. Franklin had been at home two years, after an absence of six; but he needed "no watchword save his country's cause," and prepared for his long journey at once. He was leaving his country this time a less popular man than he had been before, because he had been bold enough to take the side of the weak against the strong, even though the latter were the greatest men in the Province. Before he started, he said, "I am now to take leave, perhaps a last leave, of the country I love, and in which I have spent the greatest part of my life. I wish every prosperity to my friends, and I forgive my enemies."

CHAPTER VIII.

STORMY TIMES.

ONCE more Franklin landed in England in December, and took up his abode at the same house in Craven Street. It was kept by a Mrs. Stevenson and her daughter, who gave him a hearty welcome. Dr. Franklin soon found that he was not the only agent from America, and that there were many others from different provinces, who had come to protest against the injustice of being made to pay heavy taxes without having a voice in the matter.

The first news that the agents heard was bad: Grenville, who was Prime Minister, was just preparing

to bring in the Stamp Act. It was only a small tax, but it was what we may call a "feeler," that the English Government might see by the way in which that trifle was received, whether it would be safe to lay heavier burdens upon the colonists.

Dr. Franklin was an earnest, clever agent, and left no stone unturned to prevent the Stamp Act passing, but the tide was too strong for him; neither could he succeed in getting the Government changed from the Proprietaries to the king. "Then he failed in his mission," some one may say. Not at all—by pamphlets, newspaper articles, and earnest conversation, he raised such a feeling in England, that Parliament was obliged at last to repeal the obnoxious Stamp Act.

When the first news of the passing of the Act reached America, the political enemies of Dr. Franklin put the whole blame on his shoulders. Many caricatures were made of him, and the following is a specimen of the verses which were published on the subject: anything further from the truth, and more unjust, it would hardly be possible to write.

> "All his designs concentre in himself,
> For building castles and amassing pelf;
> The public 'tis his wit to sell for gain,
> Whom private property did ne'er maintain."

Not content with paper war, some people even went so far as to threaten to destroy Franklin's house; and his wife was urged to take shelter with William

Franklin, who was then Governor of New Jersey; but the brave woman refused to move, though she sent away her only daughter, Sarah.

When Dr. Franklin was questioned before the House of Commons, after his writings on the Stamp Act had made so much sensation, he said that he would rather lose all his debts than give a receipt on stamped paper. Although he was examined and cross-examined by the cleverest lawyers in the kingdom, he never lost his self-possession, and, what was far more praiseworthy, he never lost his temper. The noted preacher Whitefield said of him, "He stood unappalled, gave pleasure to his friends, and honour to his country."

It may easily be imagined how delighted Franklin was when the Act was repealed; in his joy he sent his wife a new gown, with the following letter: "As the Stamp Act is at length repealed, I am willing you should have a new gown, which you may suppose I did not send sooner, as I knew you would not like to be finer than your neighbours, unless in a gown of your own spinning. Had the trade between the two countries totally ceased, it was a comfort to me to recollect that I had once been clothed from head to foot in woollen and linen of my wife's manufacture, that I never was prouder of any dress in my life, and that she and her daughter might do it again if it was necessary. I told the Parliament that it was my opinion that before the old clothes of the Americans

were worn out, they might have new ones of their own making."

In spite of political cares and scientific studies, Franklin was always full of interest in his far-off home, and whilst in London he sent many presents across the Atlantic. Once it was "carpeting for a best room floor, enough for one large or two small ones. It is to be sewed together, the edges being first felled down, and care taken to make the figures meet exactly. There is a bordering for the same. This was my fancy."

It almost makes one smile to read of the great philosopher and politician taking care to tell his wife that the patterns should be well matched in a certain carpet, and yet it gives one a clear insight into the man's character. Whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well, and he might have said of himself:—

> "If I were a cobbler, it should be my pride,
> The best of all cobblers to be;
> If I were a tinker, no tinker beside
> Should mend a tin saucepan like me."

It is impossible to describe the public joy in America on the repeal of the Stamp Act. Many prisoners were set free; the captain of the vessel which brought the news to Philadelphia was presented with a gold-laced hat, and made a member of a city club, while every man and boy of his crew had some token of gratitude given to him. The city was illuminated,

and three hundred gentlemen drank to the health of Dr. Franklin, at a banquet given by the Governor and the Mayor. When George III's. birthday came round, these same gentlemen appeared in new suits of English manufacture, and a barge forty feet long, which had been named *Franklin*, was taken in procession through the streets, while salutes were fired from it.

Although he was harassed by public business, Dr. Franklin was still anxiously looking out for other means of serving his beloved country. He had long fancied that America would be a suitable place for making silk, and he set himself to study in different parts of Europe all the particulars as to the growth of mulberry trees, the rearing of silkworms, and the reeling of the silk. In 1769 he formed a company for the manufacture of this most useful article, and although the American Revolt put a stop to it before long, Franklin had the satisfaction of knowing that in August, 1771, ten thousand pounds' weight of cocoons were sold in public at Philadelphia.

When Franklin came to England in 1764 he was the representative of Philadelphia only, but four years afterwards he was made agent for Georgia, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. These appointments, and the growing clouds which were gathering between England and France, made Franklin remain in England, hoping to see the threatened storm pass by. So month after month rolled on, and during the

leisure that he had from public affairs he devoted himself to scientific studies.

The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's applied to the Royal Society for suggestions as to the best way of protecting the Cathedral from lightning. Franklin was placed on the Committee, and the result of the debate was that lightning-conductors were fixed on St. Paul's. Before long a keen dispute arose as to whether the lightning-conductors should be sharp or blunt. Dr. Franklin maintained, as he had always done, that they ought to be pointed, but another member of the Royal Society declared that they should be blunt.

A third gentleman, who was very fond of Dr. Franklin, wrote a cutting reply to the advocate of the blunt system, which he sent to Franklin before having it published. The latter's letter to him may teach some of us a useful lesson in everyday life. After saying that the expressions were far too angry to be used by one philosopher when speaking of another, he says :—

"I have never entered into any controversy in defence of my philosophical opinions; I leave them to take their chance in the world. If they are *right*, truth and experience will support them; if *wrong*, they ought to be refuted and rejected. Disputes are apt to sour one's temper, and disturb one's quiet."

So hot was the dispute, that it became almost

a public question, and here is one epigram among dozens which were made at the time:—

"While you, great George, for safety hunt,
And sharp conductors change for blunt,
The empire's out of joint;
Franklin a wiser course pursues,
And all your thunder fearless views,
By keeping to the point."

As we have said, Franklin kept up a brisk correspondence with his friends and relations all this time, and there is a letter from him to his sister which shows the fun which still existed in him, in spite of all the hard knocks of his enemies. She had apologised for her bad spelling, and, unspoilt by the compliments of those who admired him for his powers of mind, he wrote to comfort her about it. He said that a gentleman received a letter in which were these words:—"Not finding Brown at home, I delivered your meseg to his yf." The gentleman finding it bad spelling, and therefore not very intelligible, called his wife to help him read it. Between them they picked out the meaning of all but the yf, which they could not understand. The lady proposed calling her chambermaid, because "Betty," says she, "has the best knack of reading bad spelling of any one I know." Betty came, and was surprised that neither sir nor madam could tell what "yf" was. "Why," says she, "yf spells wife; what else can it spell? Indeed, it is a much better, as well as a much shorter

method of spelling wife than doubleyou, i, ef, e, which is really doubleyouyfey."

Although Franklin was a very careful man in his own money matters, he was always ready to help those who were in distress. Once a friend wrote to him for some money, and Dr. Franklin sent him ten pounds, saying "I do not pretend to *give* such a sum; I only *lend* it to you. When you shall return to your country with a good character, you cannot fail of getting into some business that will in time enable you to pay all your debts. In that case, when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him, enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation when he shall be able, and shall meet with such another opportunity. I hope it may thus go through many hands before it meets with a knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford *much* in good work, and so am obliged to be cunning, and make the most of a little."

But whilst we have been looking on the sunny side of Dr. Franklin's life, he has been passing through some very dark clouds. After the repeal of the Stamp Act, the English Government imposed a tax on paper, paint, glass, and tea, which he once more opposed as being unjust, so long as the colonists had no voice in Parliament. Then, hearing that English

ships were before Boston, and English soldiers parading the streets, he was convinced that the differences between the two countries were being fermented by officers in the provinces, who represented falsely the temper and movements of the colonists. Certain letters, which actually were written by the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, were shown to him by a Member of Parliament. These men asked for English troops and fleets to be sent to quell the Americans, and Franklin forthwith had the letters published. The result was a petition from the people of Massachusetts for the immediate recall of the two men who had proved so unfit to be trusted with their interests. Franklin was away from London when the first commotion began, and was pained to hear that two gentlemen had been accused of obtaining the letters dishonourably, and that a duel had followed. He wrote at once, "I think it incumbent upon me to declare that I alone am the person who obtained and transmitted to Boston the letters in question."

Now began poor Franklin's humiliation; he was called upon to appear before the Privy Council to prove the charges which were brought against the two Governors. Most of the noted men of England were present, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Prime Minister, and as Franklin glanced over the faces of those who were really his accusers, he saw not a friendly one among them. The rest of the room was

crowded with people anxious to hear the issue of the strange trial.

Franklin had declared, by presenting the petition from Massachusetts, that he considered Governor Hutchinson and his colleague unfit to hold their offices, and he was now called upon to prove this. It must have been a strange scene that the visitors looked upon that day, as Franklin stood with one elbow on the mantel-piece, resting his chin upon his hand, and listening without a word of anger, or shadow of ill-temper, to the browbeating and the base insinuations of the cleverest lawyer in England, Wedderburn, while the Lords of the Privy Council laughed heartily at each savage epithet which was thrown at the American. He was accused of stealing private papers, of misrepresenting their contents, and of having made use of his skill as a printer to publish them.

There was, perhaps, hardly another man living who could have borne these accusations without a word, and merely said at the end that he did not wish to answer any questions.

The result of it all was, that the petition was pronounced "false, vexatious, and scandalous," and was rejected. The trial took place on a Saturday, and on Monday Franklin received a note to inform him that the king had dismissed him from being Deputy Postmaster-General in America, which office he had for some time held.

After this, Dr. Franklin knew that he had very

little more to do in England; indeed, he stayed there at great personal risk, for if an engagement had taken place between the New Englanders and the British troops, he would probably have been arrested on suspicion of causing it. But the American colonies had called together an Assembly, or Congress, to consider their future plans, and he stayed to hear the result of the next meeting, in case he could be of any use. Meanwhile, his advice to all Americans was, that they should firmly resolve not to use any English goods; this, he rightly said, must soon raise a clamour amongst the rich as well as the labouring classes.

Congress met, and a petition repeating the same proposals which Franklin had brought over was sent to the king, which Franklin and two others were to present to Lord Dartmouth. The petition reached the king, and he referred it to Parliament, where it lay three days unread, and then was received with laughter and abuse, and dismissed.

As the public feeling grew stronger in America, and the colonists determined to resist what they considered the unfair taxation of the Home Government and the tyranny of the Proprietaries, Lord Chatham took up the American cause; and in some of his most eloquent speeches declared that he was convinced that Parliament would have to retract in the end, if they did not at first. But, as Dr. Franklin observed, it was all so much whistling of the wind for the effect it had on Parliament—the Americans were to be

crushed into submission by the force of the British Army and Navy. There was one other course which might be tried first, and under the impression that every man can be bought over from his party, provided you pay a large enough price, Lord Howe called upon Franklin, and begged him to use his influence in America to bring about a better feeling.

What the open disgrace before the Privy Council could not do, the bare suggestion of neglecting his country's cause did at once, and Franklin's spirit was roused at last, as he replied indignantly, "The Ministry, I am sure, would rather give me a place in a cart to Tyburn than any other place whatever. I sincerely desire to be serviceable, and I need no other inducement that I might be so."

This was only one of several attempts to bribe the stubborn patriot to consult his personal interest, and leave his country's battles to be fought by another. The end of the whole matter was, that the Government would do nothing that was asked; they would neither withdraw the troops, nor allow the Americans to be represented in Parliament. Another attempt was made to buy Franklin's influence, and then, seeing that there was no hope of a peaceful settlement of the grievances, he packed up for home.

Whilst Franklin was bearing all the worry and excitement inseparable from such a contest, his wife had been seized with a paralytic stroke, in December 1774, and after lingering for five days she died. She had

borne her husband's absence with extraordinary bravery, hoping as each month passed away that she would see him before the next was ended. She had been Franklin's helpmeet for more than forty-four years, and had made his home bright with gentle words and loving smiles. Many years afterwards, Dr. Franklin wrote to a friend, "Frugality is an enriching virtue, a virtue I never could acquire myself; but I was once lucky enough to find it in a wife, who therefore became a fortune to me."

An amusing anecdote is told of Franklin during the last few weeks in England. He was spending the evening at a nobleman's house, when the conversation turned on fables. One gentleman said, that Æsop, La Fontaine, and Gay had so thoroughly used up all that could be taught in that way, that there was not a single animal which could be worked into an original fable. Dr. Franklin, on the other hand, argued that new fables could always be invented. "Can you think of one now?" asked some one.

"I think so," was the answer, "if you will furnish me with pencil and paper." He then sat down, and wrote as fast as his fingers could move:

"The Eagle and the Cat."

"Once upon a time, an eagle, stealing round a farmer's barn, and espying a hare, darted down upon him like a sunbeam, seized him in his claws, and re-mounted with him into the air. He soon found that

he had a creature of more courage and strength than a hare; for which, notwithstanding the keenness of his eyesight, he had mistaken a cat. The snarling and scrambling of his prey were very inconvenient. And what was worse, she had disengaged herself from his talons, grasped his body with her four limbs, so as to stop his breath, and seized fast hold of his throat with her teeth. 'Pray,' said the eagle, 'let go your hold, and I will release you."

"'Very fine,' said the cat, 'but I have no fancy to fall from this height, and to be crushed to death. You have taken me up, and you shall stoop and let me down.' The eagle thought it necessary to stoop accordingly."

This fable was read aloud, and as all the company were in favour of the American cause, it was received with loud applause.

Although Dr. Franklin had suffered such unpleasant treatment from the English Government, he had been more in favour than ever with men of science and literature, and it was no doubt owing to his intense happiness in all his studies that he managed to spend ten long years in England without a murmur. He generally went away from London in the summer, and visited Ireland, Scotland, or France.

When he first went to Paris in 1767, he met with the most hearty welcome, and was received very cordially by King Louis XV.; indeed, the unive[illegible]

kindness by which he was treated filled him with friendly feelings towards the French, which lasted throughout his life.

His visit to Ireland was just as successful. The Irish then had a Parliament of their own, and he happened to be in Dublin at the opening of the Session. It had always been the custom to admit Members of the English Parliament to sit in the House among the Irish members, though of course they were not allowed to vote. Other strangers were only seated in the gallery.

Dr. Franklin was accompanied by an English Member, who was, of course, admitted, while the American expected to be banished to the gallery. His astonishment was great when the Speaker stood up and said that he understood there was in town an American of distinguished character and merit; a Member or delegate of some of the Parliaments of that country, who was desirous of being present at the debates of the House; that there was a rule of the House for admitting Members of English Parliaments, and that he supposed the House would consider the American Assemblies as English Parliaments.

The House gave one loud, unanimous *Ay*, and two members went to Dr. Franklin, and leading him in between them, placed him in an honourable position.

CHAPTER IX.

FOREMOST IN THE FIGHT.

ON March 1st, 1775, Dr. Franklin returned to Philadelphia with a sad heart, persuaded now that nothing but bloodshed would restore Freedom to his beloved country. Although he was getting an old man, his thirst for knowledge was just as great as when he dined on raisins and bread in order that he might have more time and money for books and study. So, as the vessel ploughed its way across the Atlantic, he was busily engaged in trying experiments with a thermometer.

It had been noticed that the packet-ships took longer in the voyage from England to America than the merchant vessels did. This was put down to the sailors' ignorance of the Gulf Stream, which they were often seen *stemming* or sailing against. Dr. Franklin heard of this, and thought the best remedy would be to have some sure means of discovering when they had really entered the Gulf Stream. During this voyage, then, he learnt, by means of a thermometer, that the water in the Gulf Stream retains part of its heat while passing from the Tropics to the Northern Seas, and so the sailors could know when they were in it by taking the temperature of the water.

On May 5th, 1775, Dr. Franklin arrived at Philadelphia, and met with just such a welcome as he deserved. He was sixty-nine years old, but as upright in form and strong in health as if he had but numbered half those years. A healthy mind in a healthy body had saved both from being destroyed by work and worry, which would have made many another man old before his time. He was indeed a wonderful man; a good son, a loving husband and father; moral and temperate, punctual and exact in money matters, yet always ready to help those in distress; witty and wise, yet never forgetting that *Noblesse oblige;* so there was little wonder that he should be the most popular man of his day.

War had already begun, and there had been two encounters between the American and British troops at Lexington and Concord, about a fortnight before Franklin arrived; and while the whole country was ringing with his praise, Dr. Franklin was chosen by the Assembly as a Member of the Congress, which was to meet on the 10th of the same month.

On the 17th of June was fought the battle of Bunker Hill. Franklin had done all in his power to prevent the breach between America and the mother country; but after his stay in England, he was convinced that America would no longer thrive under the home government, and he now threw all his vast powers into the fight for Independence.

One of the first offices given to him by the Con-

gress was that of Postmaster-General, and he took prompt measures to prevent letters passing through the hands of British agents, who might have considered that all was fair in love and war, and have retained such as they considered objectionable or dangerous.

For seven years the War of Independence lasted in America: the saddest of all sad wars, because it was waged between people who spoke the same language, and had once gloried in the same name of Englishmen. We do not wish to enter into an account of this well-known conflict, but simply to touch upon it where it is necessary to follow the career of Dr. Franklin. Whilst Washington was with his troops surrounding Boston, which was then held by the English, Franklin was sent with three others to confer with him, as to the best means for raising and and supplying the American Army. Here he met several of his old friends, as well as members of his family, and was greeted by one and all with admiration and respect. There is an account given of a scene when Franklin was at headquarters, which may encourage those of our readers who are seeking knowledge under difficulties, so we will relate it, though it may be, perhaps, a little beyond our younger friends.

"A certain General Greene was present, of whom it has been said, 'He had been one of the book-devouring boys of New England who eat their dinner in

ten minutes, in order to get the other fifty for reading ; who secrete candle-ends for a midnight revel upon Euclid ; who hoard their pence to buy an old Latin Dictionary, and their minutes to study it ; who astonish their relations who foretold ruin from such waste of time, by becoming the great men of their families before they are thirty-five.'

"General Greene had now the felicity of seeing Benjamin Franklin, the founder of that noble New England order—the first and greatest of the candle-end stealers and furtive book absorbents. The young enthusiast gazed with rapture upon his aged chief. 'During the whole evening,' he wrote, 'I viewed that very great man with silent admiration.'"

The following year, Franklin was sent with other commissioners to visit an American General who was at Montreal, and confer with him as to whether it would be wise to attempt to take Canada. It was a journey of five hundred miles, and Franklin was seventy years old, yet he undertook it without a moment's hesitation, fired only with zeal for his country.

After a perilous journey, the commissioners reached Montreal, greatly exhausted, and a council of war was called, in which it was decided to give up all hopes of keeping Canada, and to withdraw the troops.

Franklin returned home safely, early in June, having been absent ten weeks. The first great change which resulted from the war was, that Pennsylvania

shook off the power of the Proprietaries, as Congress declared that all authority from the King of England was to be done away with. But as every place must have some form of government, a conference was held to decide what it should be. Once more Franklin was called upon to take his share in the work.

Next came the Declaration of Independence, which Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Livingstone, and Sherman were to prepare. When Jefferson had written out the Declaration, it was presented to Congress. One man after another made ridiculous objections, till at last Franklin, who was sitting by Jefferson's side said,

"When I was a journeyman-printer, one of my companions, an apprenticed hatter, was about to open a shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome sign-board with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words,

"'John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money,' with the figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to, thought the word *hatter* tautologous, because followed by the words *makes hats*, which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word *makes* might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats; if good and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words

for ready money very useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. Everyone who purchased expected to pay. They were parted with. The inscription now stood—

'John Thompson sells hats.'

'Sells hats,' said his next friend, why, nobody will expect you to give them away. What, then, is the use of that word?' It was struck out, and 'hats' followed, the rather as there was one painted on the board. So his inscription was reduced ultimately to *John Thompson*, with the figure of a hat."

The Declaration of Independence was discussed for three days by Congress, and passed on the 4th July, 1776.

On the 20th of the same month, Franklin was chosen one of nine delegates to represent Pennsylvania at the next National Congress. One great difficulty to be overcome in establishing the new Union of the States was, how such large Provinces as New York and Pennsylvania should have their rightful influence in the confederacy, while such small States as New Jersey and Delaware should be fairly represented. It was arranged that each State, whether large or small, should have two Representatives in the Senate, and that the number of Representatives in the House should depend on the population.

When the smaller States were inclined to think themselves ill-treated and to wish to be placed on the same footing as the others, Franklin said, "Let the

smaller colonies give equal money and men, and then have an equal vote. But if they have an equal vote without equal burdens, a confederation upon such iniquitous principles will never last long."

In September of the same year, Dr. Franklin received a letter from one of the chief philosophers in Paris, saying that France was in sympathy with the Americans, and that the Ministry would gladly send money, ammunition, and cannon, to help them. As the French Ministry were, on the other hand, anxious to avoid war with England, the news was wrapped up in such a number of words, that it took some time to discover the real meaning of the letter.

This information sent a thrill of joy through the hearts of all who had been fighting so long for liberty, and who had begun to fear their struggle would be in vain. The next thing now was to send an embassy to the Court of France; three gentlemen were to be sent, and none of our readers will be surprised that Dr. Franklin was the first chosen by ballot, without one vote against him. When Franklin heard this, he exclaimed—

"I am old and good for nothing. But, as the storekeepers say of their remnants of cloth, 'I am but a fag-end, and you may have me for what you please.'"

Although he joked about his mission in this way, it must have required plenty of courage and self-denial for a man of seventy to turn his back on his

home, and face a long voyage, across an ocean swarming with English vessels, to be followed by arduous duties at a foreign Court. Silas Deane and Arthur Lee were his fellow delegates. Their names are only mentioned because of an incident which shows at once Franklin's wit, good-temper, and humility. Many people who are clever use their wit to mar peace and goodwill, rather than to make them. Dr. Franklin, on the other hand, used it to promote good-temper and happiness. Many a time when his friends were wrangling upon some subject, a joke from his lips would cause a general laugh, and clear away the threatened storm.

One day, whilst the three American delegates were living at Passy, which was then a little village outside Paris, a cake was sent, with the inscription, "*Le digne Franklin*," which all of our readers well know means "The worthy Franklin." Mr. Lee, who did not possess the sweetest of tempers, exclaimed, "Well, Doctor, we have to thank you for our accommodations, and to appropriate your present to our use." "Not at all," said Franklin, "this cake is for all the Commissioners. The French, not being able to write good English, do not spell our names correctly. The meaning, doubtless, is Lee, Deane, Franklin." Could any one have given a better turning to an incident which threatened to be unpleasant, even to putting himself last? But we have forestalled our history, and must return to Philadelphia, where we

find the traveller patriot preparing for a voyage, from which he did not expect to return, by collecting all the money he had, and lending it to the Government, who sadly needed funds.

Silas Deane was in France, and Arthur Lee was in England; so Franklin left Philadelphia on October 26th, 1776, accompanied by his two grandsons—one of eighteen, who was to act as his private secretary—the other of seven years, whom he intended to place in a school in Paris.

In spite of many fears and scares, the ship arrived safely at Quiberon Bay, and Franklin received a regular ovation from the French people, who were charmed with his courtly manners, his rich yet simple dress, and his wonderful abilities. Silas Deane thus describes the manner in which Dr. Franklin was treated at Paris: "Never did I enjoy greater satisfaction than in being the spectator of the public honours often paid to him. A celebrated cause being to be heard before the Parliament of Paris, and the house and the street leading to it being crowded with people, on the appearance of Dr. Franklin way was made for him in the most respectful manner, and he passed through the crowd to the seat reserved for him, amid the acclamations of the people—an honour seldom paid to their first princes of the blood. When he attended the operas and plays, similar honours were paid to him, and I confess I felt a joy and pride which was pure and honest, though not disinterested; for I con-

sidered it an honour to be an American, and his acquaintance."

All large cities grow apace, and in those days Paris was surrounded by beautiful villages, which have now become as much a part of the city proper as Notting Hill is of London. In one of these villages there lived a Monsieur de Chaumont, who offered one of his splendid houses for the use of Dr. Franklin; an offer which was gracefully accepted, with the promise that when the miserable war was over, Congress would not forget the gentleman who had befriended their representative in the time of need.

Taking up his residence at Passy early in 1777, Franklin remained there all the time of his sojourn in France. Although he was so old, he did not allow the grass to grow under his feet; and five days after his arrival in Paris, he and the two other envoys had their first interview with the French Minister, Count de Vergennes. As news came from America of fierce fighting, of villages and towns burned, and women and children homeless and starving, the aged patriot devoted twelve hours out of the twenty-four to the duties of his mission, exciting himself more than ever to obtain help from the French Government for the struggling Colonies.

At first all seemed dark, and the French Ministry, not wishing to be at war with England, would only offer a loan of two million francs (£80,000) to be repaid with interest after the war, on condition it was not

said where the money came from. But when at last the tide turned, and the news came that the English General, Burgoyne, and his whole army, had been taken prisoners of war, the envoys rejoiced with a silent tearful joy, for they knew that now France would openly espouse their cause, and with her help they felt their country would soon be independent.

A treaty was signed between France and the "United States" on February 5th, 1778, in which it was agreed that the Independence of the States should be established, and that neither they nor France should make a truce or peace with England without the consent of the other; and troops and money were sent to America forthwith. The first result of this treaty, so far as the American envoys were concerned, was an invitation to an audience with the King (Louis XVI.), at Versailles.

Dr. Franklin began preparations for this important visit by ordering a wig, as no one thought it possible at that time to appear before the King of France without one. The wig was brought home, and Franklin tried to put it on in vain; do as he would, he could not get it to cover his head. At last he ventured to suggest that it was too small. The perruquier, or wig-maker, was indignant at such a suggestion, exclaiming, in a passion, "No, Monsieur, it is not the wig that is too small, it is your head which is too large!"

King Louis and his wife (Marie Antoinette), re-

ceived the American envoys with the greatest courtesy, but the central figure of the group, on whom all eyes were turned with a respectful admiration, was Benjamin Franklin. Perhaps some of our readers may like to know how he was dressed for this important interview. He had a suit of plain black silk velvet, with embroidered ruffles, white silk stockings, and silver buckles on his shoes. The venerable philosopher, whose works had been known in France long before his face was seen there, soon became such a favourite, that portraits of him abounded everywhere, and his form became better known than that of any one in the two continents of Europe and America.

Franklin told his daughter, in one of his letters, of this rage for medallions, medals and busts, which were made in astonishing numbers—"some to be set in the lids of snuff-boxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are incredible. These, with the pictures, busts and prints (of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere), have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do anything that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should show it. It is said by learned etymologists, that the name *doll*, for the images children play with, is derived from the word *idol*. From the number of *dolls* now made of me, I may truly be said in that sense to be i-doll-ized in this country."

In the year 1779 Dr. Franklin was raised yet another rung in the social ladder, by being appointed sole delegate to France, from the new nation of the United States, and had the satisfaction of knowing that his appointment was approved by every one.

It must not, however, be forgotten that all great men have some enemies, and that the happiest and most successful life has its dark clouds, which sometimes blot out the sunshine.

Dr. Franklin had only three children—namely, two sons and a daughter. One son had died at the early age of four from small-pox; the other son, William, who was older, had nearly broken his father's heart by taking opposite sides to him in politics.

The latter was made Governor of New Jersey through his father's influence, and when the war of Independence broke out, Dr. Franklin had the sorrow of seeing him kept in prison for two years and four months by the Americans, who were indignant with him for acting as agent for the English Ministry. The elder grandson, William Temple Franklin, whom with his younger brother Dr. Franklin had taken with him to Paris, was William's son, and had taken the same side as his grandfather. Soon after the appointment of Dr. Franklin as sole agent, a plot was made by his political enemies to deprive him of the society of his grandson; and the poor old man felt this keenly.

"It is enough that I have lost my son," he said.

"Would they add my *grandson?* An old man of seventy, I undertook a winter voyage at the command of Congress, with no other attendant to take care of me. I am continued here in a foreign country, where, if I am sick, his filial attention comforts me; and if I die, I have a child to close my eyes, and take care of my remains. His dutiful behaviour toward me, and his diligence and fidelity in business, are both pleasing and useful to me. His conduct as my private secretary has been unexceptionable, and I am confident Congress will never think of separating us."

This unkind plot of Dr. Franklin's enemies came to nothing, and his grandson remained with him during his sojourn in France and returned to Pennsylvania with him.

About this time, a letter came from his daughter, who was married many years before, asking Dr. Franklin to send her certain articles of finery from Paris, to which he replied,—

"When I began to read your account of the high prices of goods—'a pair of gloves, seven dollars; a yard of common gauze, twenty-four dollars; and that it now required a fortune to maintain a family in a very plain way'—I expected you would conclude by telling me that everybody, as well as yourself, was grown frugal and industrious, and I could scarce believe my eyes in reading forward that there was 'never so much pleasure and dressing going

on,' and that you yourself wanted black pins and feathers from France, to appear, I suppose, in the mode! This leads me to imagine that perhaps it is not so much that the goods are grown dear, as that the money has grown cheap, as everything else will do when excessively plenty; and that people are still as easy nearly in their circumstances as when a pair of gloves might be had for half-a-crown. The war, indeed, may in some degree raise the price of goods, and the high taxes which are necessary to support the war may make our frugality necessary, and as I am always preaching that doctrine, I cannot in conscience or in decency encourage the contrary by my example, in furnishing my children with foolish modes and luxuries. I therefore send all the articles you desire that are useful and necessary, and omit the rest; for as you say you should have great pride in wearing anything I send, and showing it as your father's taste, I must avoid giving you an opportunity of doing that with either lace or feathers. If you wear your cambric ruffles as I do, and take care not to mend the holes, they will come in time to be lace; and feathers, my dear girl, may be had in America from every cock's tail."

This letter and the following anecdote will show that Dr. Franklin was not spoiled by the extraordinary success which might probably have turned many heads.

One day whilst he was at Passy, surrounded by

men of rank and fashion, a young man was presented who had just come from America. It was noticed that Dr. Franklin paid him marked attention, and after a time he said to him, "I have been under obligations to your family; when I set up business in Philadelphia, being in debt for my printing materials, and wanting employment, the first job I had was a pamphlet written by your grandfather; it gave me encouragement, and was the beginning of my success."

CHAPTER X.

THE TOP OF THE LADDER.

DR. FRANKLIN had stated, when he was a young man, that although he never would ask for an office, he would never resign one; but in the year 1781, being seventy-five years old, and having served his country for fifty, he began to think better of that last resolution, and wrote home for permission to withdraw from his post of delegate. The Americans knew the value of their representative, and instead of releasing him from his labours, added more to them. The time had come when negotiations for peace might be thought of, and who was so fitted to help in arranging them as Franklin?

When a friend wrote to congratulate him on the new honour which was now bestowed on him, and

called him the keystone of the American arch, Dr. Franklin thanked him for the compliment, which was very pretty, and helped to make him satisfied with his situation. "But," he added, "I suppose you have heard our story of the harrow; if not, here it is. A farmer in our country sent two of his servants to borrow a harrow of a neighbour, ordering them to bring it between them on their shoulders. When they came to look at it, one of them who had much wit and cunning said, 'What could our master mean by sending only two men to bring this harrow? No two men on earth are strong enough to carry it.' 'Pooh,' said the other, who was vain of his strength; 'what do you talk of two men? One man may carry it. Help it upon my shoulders and see.' As he proceeded with it the wag kept exclaiming, 'How strong you are! I could not have thought it. Why, you are a Samson! There is not such another man in America. What amazing strength God has given you! But you will kill yourself! Pray put it down, or rest a little, or let me bear a part of the weight.' 'No, no,' said he, being more encouraged by the compliments than oppressed by the burden, 'you shall see I can carry it quite home.' And so he did."

In the latter part of October of the same year, Lord Cornwallis, being surrounded by the French Fleet at sea, and by twelve hundred American and French troops on land, was obliged to surrender his whole army. It will be remembered that this was

the second English Army that had been captured, and it was not likely that the Ministry would risk sending another. On the 28th of February, 1782, a resolution was presented in the House of Commons that "The Reduction of the Colonies by Force is Impracticable," which was carried by a majority of nineteen, and virtually ended the American War, though it was not until September 3rd, 1783, that the Treaty of Peace was signed. It was ratified by Congress on January 14th of the following year, and was signed by the King of England on April 9th.

It is said that Dr. Franklin signed the Treaty in the same coat which he had worn twelve years before, when he was standing before the Privy Council, and was so abused by Wedderburn.

Dr. Franklin's house at Passy was, as we have said, the resort of all the learned men in Paris. There, as in London, he entertained his friends with electrical experiments, and charmed them by his learned and bright conversation. As in his younger days, he was ever ready with a joke, and to take up the cudgels on behalf of humanity at large, or Americans in particular.

One day, he had a party of Americans and French dining with him; amongst the latter was a certain Abbé Raynal, who was one of the croakers we sometimes come across, who do their best to make everybody discontented, who see no good in the present,

and can only praise the past. With his usual eloquence, the Abbé began to groan over the fact that neither animals nor men were as large and well-formed as they used to be. Dr. Franklin, glancing down the table, noticed that there were an equal number of French and Americans, and they had taken their places together on each side of the table: he saw his way at once to smash the pessimist's theory at a single stroke.

"Come, Monsieur l'Abbé," he said, "let us try this question by the fact before us. We are here one half Americans and one half French, and it happens that the Americans have placed themselves on one side of the table, and our French friends are on the other. Let both parties rise, and we will see on which side nature has degenerated." It happened that the American friends were some of the tallest and best-formed men you could wish to meet, while those on the other side of the table were peculiarly short, and the Abbé himself the smallest of the number. Of course there was nothing for it but the well-worn apology that there are exceptions to every rule.

By the time the peace was settled, and the United States started on their career, like children loosed from leading-strings, the noble patriot was declining in health as he gained in celebrity. Only two more steps remained for him: the first would plant his foot on the very top of the ladder he had so patiently climbed, and the second would take him to that far-

off Home to which we all look forward, as a rest after the turmoil of earth.

Dr. Franklin was seventy-eight years of age, and suffered severely from gout, and another painful disease, so that he often received his distinguished visitors in his bedroom; yet his mind was unclouded as ever, and the charm of his conversation was as powerful as when his now snowy locks were untinged with grey. Some of his finest essays were written whilst he was waiting for permission to return to America. Old and feeble, and in a strange country, he longed for the summons to his beloved Philadelphia.

It came at last, and as he was too infirm to pay his respects to the King or the Minister, he sent the following touching letter to the Count de Vergennes. "May I beg the favour of you, sir, to express respectfully for me to His Majesty, the deep sense I have of all the inestimable benefits his goodness has conferred on my country; a sentiment that it will be the business of the little remainder of the life now left me, to impress equally on the minds of all my countrymen. My sincere prayers are that God may shower down his blessings on the King, the Queen, their children, and all the Royal Family to the latest generation."

The King sent him, as a farewell present, his own portrait, set in a frame with four hundred and eight diamonds; and the Queen offered to lend him her

own litter to take him to Havre in order that he might travel as comfortably as possible. Mr. Jefferson succeeded him as delegate to the Court of France.

"You replace Dr. Franklin, I hear," said the Count de Vergennes. "I *succeed*, no one can *replace*, him," was the answer of the new plenipotentiary.

On July 12th, 1785, Dr. Franklin started for home, and the whole journey was a triumphal procession; high and low, rich and poor, turning out to pay honour to the patriot and philosopher, who had once been a printer's boy.

Old as he was, the desire for knowledge was still strong within him; perhaps, like all true students, the more he knew, the more he felt how ignorant he was; for it is only your dabbler in science, philosophy, music, or art, who can sit down with folded hands, and speak of a "finished" education. So, during this last voyage, Franklin wrote essays on navigation and smoky chimneys, which are reckoned among the cleverest of his writings, besides making some more experiments in the Gulf Stream.

His reception at Philadelphia is best given in his own words: "My son-in-law came in a boat for us. We landed at Market Street Wharf, where we were received by a crowd of people with huzzahs, and accompanied with acclamations quite to my door. Found my family well. God be praised and thanked for all his mercies."

Surely now the old man might expect to live the few years that remained to him in peace, unharassed by public business; but his fellow-countrymen thought otherwise. He was first chosen Chairman of the Supreme Executive, and then Governor of Pennsylvania. When the former post was offered to to him, he wrote to a friend,

"I had not firmness enough to resist the unanimous desire of my countryfolk, and I find myself harnessed again in their service for another year. They engrossed the prime of my life. They have eaten my flesh, and seem resolved now to pick my bones."

In the year 1787, a Convention met to make a new constitution for the government of the State. Washington and Franklin were both delegates, and the former was in the chair. The discussion lasted four months, and during all that time Dr. Franklin was in his seat five hours every day, opposing strenuously every measure which he thought likely to prove hurtful to the Republic. For many weeks Convention met, and seemed to do nothing but disagree: at last Franklin stood up, and made the following beautiful speech:

"In the beginning of the contest with Britain," he said, "when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered; all of us who were engaged in the struggle

must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favour. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend, or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that *God governs in the affairs of men.* And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it possible that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house, they labour but in vain that build it. I firmly believe this, and I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little partial local interests, our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a byword down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning, before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy in this city be requested to officiate in that service."

This speech, which failed to move most of the Members of the Assembly, must have found an answering echo in the heart of George Washington, who had, through all the troublous times, asked God's blessing on every step he took. The conference came to a close at last, and every one had cause to be satisfied with the work done.

Dr. Franklin was President of the State for three years, and then he was obliged to retire. He suffered a great deal of pain for two years, and for twelve months he was bedridden, yet he never murmured or gave way to temper. Miss Stevenson, who had learnt to respect and admire the noble man who had spent so many years at her mother's house in Craven Street, was now married, and living in Philadelphia; and she records the way in which he bore two years' suffering.

"When his pain was not too violent to allow him to be amused, he employed himself with his books, or in conversation with his friends; and upon every occasion displayed the clearness of his intellect, and the cheerfulness of his temper. Even when the intervals from pain were so short that his words were frequently interrupted, I have known him to hold a discourse in a sublime strain of piety. I never shall forget him in bed in great agony; but when that agony abated a little I asked him if I should read to him. He said 'Yes,' and the first book I met with was Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets.' I read the life of

Watts, who was a favourite author with Dr. Franklin, and instead of lulling him to sleep, it roused him to a display of the powers of his memory and reason. He repeated several of Watts' lyric poems, and descanted on their sublimity in a strain worthy of them and their pious author."

Once, when a clerical friend came to see him, one of his worst attacks came on. The clergyman was just going out of the room, when Franklin exclaimed —"Oh no, don't go away. These pains will soon be over—they are for my good; and besides, what are the pains of a moment in comparison with the pleasures of eternity?"

A little while before he died, he asked the nurse to hang a picture of Our Lord on the Cross just where he could see it; as she did so, he said—

"Ay, Sarah, there is a picture worth looking at. That is the picture of Him who came into the world to teach men to love one another."

Not long after this, he passed quietly away—on April 17th, 1790—having lived more than eighty-four years.

All the money which Dr. Franklin received for his services as President he spent for the public good, so that to the very last his country kept the first place in his thoughts. He bequeathed his crab-tree walking-stick—which had a gold head representing a cap of Liberty—to his beloved friend, George Washington, with these memorable words—"If it

were a sceptre, he has merited it, and would become it."

They were strange words from one who had become convinced that the Republican form of government was the best; but it would seem that most people would approve of a king of their own choosing.

When it was known that the great Franklin was dead, there was general and deep sorrow throughout America. All the bells were tolled, and all flags were hung half-mast high, until his body was laid to rest by the side of that of his wife.

An interesting ceremony took place in Paris on receipt of the sad news. The Society of Printers met in a spacious hall, to pay honour to their illustrious brother. A bust of Franklin was placed in the middle of the building; at the base of the column there were several cases of type and a printing-press. One of the printers then made an oration in honour of Franklin, while some others were putting it in type. When it was printed, copies were distributed among the crowd—a strange but touching tribute of respect to one who might well be termed the King of Printers.

Looking back upon the life and work of Dr. Franklin, we find little to blame and much to praise. He was not perfect; he committed many errors which, as he himself says in printer's language, he would try to correct in a second edition if he could

live again; but, take him all in all, we cannot expect very often to see his like again. He carved out his own career, scorning the idea of patronage. It people chose to help him, well and good, but if they made that help an excuse for trying to make him write that which he did not feel, or support a cause which he believed unsound, then he would reject their aid, even if he risked ruin to himself.

He was one of the few people who can make plenty of good maxims and follow them. "When men are employed they are best contented," he observed once; and certainly his whole life was an illustration of the saying, for he was never idle, and always contented.

"Disputing, contradicting, and confuting people are generally unfortunate in their affairs," he said; "they get victory sometimes, but they never get goodwill, which would be of more use to them." As we have seen, Dr. Franklin was by nature most fond of argument, yet he overcame this taste as soon as he was persuaded it was wrong, and trusted to time, and the justice of his own cause, to set all things right.

We have already mentioned one of his shortest and wisest sayings—"The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?" and looking upon the life of Benjamin Franklin, we can find a long answer to that question. He did good to his friends by his unchanging kindness and sound advice; he did good to his enemies by his wonderful self-

control and silence under the most cutting insults, so long as they were only levelled at him; he did good to his country by spending a long lifetime in her service; he did good to philosophy by the many discoveries and improvements which he made; and he did good to the world at large, because no one can live an honest, industrious, generous life without making sunshine somewhere, especially if he believes, as Franklin did, that "kind offices should go round, as men are all of one family."

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